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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

In a CNMI election, no one can tell how you voted. Do you believe that to be true or false?

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INSIDE

LOCAL

More than 400 students register with NMC on the first day.

➤ PAGE 2

BUSINESS

Google search gets more personal, raising some hackles.

➤ PAGE 13

ENVIRONMENT

Overfishing of bigeye tuna continues in the western Pacific.

➤ PAGE 18

OPA: Probe on IPS contract justified. PAGE 3
DFW burglarized twice over weekend. PAGE 5

DHS: Cultural sensitivity training for CBP officers

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

» In response to NMI officials' concerns on treatment of tourists, businesspeople

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has reiterated that complaints of unprofessional conduct against DHS employees are recorded and investigated, but added that cultural sensitivity training sessions will be conducted for Customs and Border Protection officers stationed on Saipan in response to a lawmaker's concern that federal officers at the airport "harshly treat" visitors to the CNMI, whose only industry is tourism.

See DHS on Page 4

Pai's bid to dismiss AG's lawsuit denied

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Pai

Superior Court associate judge Kenneth L. Govendo has denied Public Auditor Michael Pai's motion to dismiss the lawsuit filed against him by Attorney General Edward T. Buckingham and Finance Secretary Larrisa Larson.

Govendo ruled that since both parties in the lawsuit are needed to petition the CNMI

See LAWSUIT on Page 4

Kilili slams defamatory 'secret' Facebook group

Sablan

CNMI Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan denounced yesterday a "secret" Facebook group that is questioning whether his wife, Andrea, is being paid from congressional funds. Federal law, as well as the House of Representatives Code of Official Conduct, prohibits a member from employing his or her spouse using congressional funds.

"It was recently brought to my attention that some individuals [have] established a

See FACEBOOK on Page 4

MEN AND STEEL

Two Maeda Pacific Corp. employees work at the construction site for a future Micronesian Brokers (CNMI) Inc. warehouse and cold storage facility in Puerto Rico yesterday afternoon. An economic slowdown has resulted in fewer residential and commercial construction, including this one which is expected to be completed on March 31, 2012.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Hundreds line up at food stamp open house

» Faisao mum on number of on-hold checks, other issues

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

As early as 8am yesterday, hundreds were lined up at the local food stamp office to either claim their checks, follow up on their applications, or try their luck if they can get their vouchers that have been pending since December.

Yesterday, it was learned, was the department's open house for the month where clients, regardless of their schedules, can claim and follow up on their applications.

In a random interview with recipients, many expressed optimism that their checks will be issued yesterday upon submission of some documents they were asked to turn in. Among these is proof that they are staying lawfully on island—any permit from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

A mother of three U.S. citizen children,

See FOOD STAMP on Page 4

Recipients of the food stamp program line up yesterday at the local NAP office in As Lito as early as 8am to either claim their vouchers, follow up on their applications, or try their luck at getting their pending assistance.

MONETH G. DEPOSA

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Local

Northern Marianas College financial aid officer Daisy Propst assists an enrollee during the first day of the weeklong registration at the college on Tuesday.

MONETH G. DEPOSA

Over 400 students enroll on 1st day of NMC registration

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

More than 400 students registered with the Northern Marianas College during the first day of its weeklong enrollment for the 2012 spring semester.

As of 6pm Tuesday, 410 students have already registered and the number is expected to increase until the last day of registration on Jan. 14.

Acting president Leo Pangelinan, described the first day of registration as smooth and gave credit to the collaborative efforts of the different offices, volunteers, and students.

In the spring 2011 semester, NMC had a total of 1,155 enrollees—a 17-percent increase over the spring 2010 semester.

Pangelinan, who is also the Student Services dean, said that they do not expect to have more students this semester because new enrollees usually come in during the fall academic term.

In a visit to the campus yesterday, hundreds of enrollees were seen at Room D-1, which serves as the institution's one-stop-shop for all registrants. Staff from various offices were seen attending to students and helping them complete their registration.

To promote good customer service, the college initiated a "Star" treatment promo, which aims to recognize the most helpful and friendly college staff. Each enrollee, upon entering the one-stop shop, gets three "Star" promo materials that they will award to whoever they feel gave them the best assistance.

Students waiting to register cooled their heels by watching a movie being shown on a flat screen TV.

Student activities coordinator L.J. Castro also conducted raffle drawings in between breaks where items were given away. Three students, he said, won free parking slots for the year. The shop also offers food, beverages, and reading materials.

According to Pangelinan, early registration started on Monday for mostly senior students and students with disabilities. Registration is ongoing until Saturday while later registrants have until next week.

$200 new fee established by BOR

Pangelinan clarified that the new $200 fee imposed by the college for international students this semester was set by the NMC Board of Regents to help pay for programs and services that benefit international students. NMC's enabling procedure for this policy provides for FAS citizens to be exempted from this fee.

"Our experience and current work with international students have also revealed additional service needs from this student population, including translation services, academic advising services, academic tutorial services, publication of important college policies, procedures, forms, and other material in different languages, and student orientation activities, to name a few," Pangelinan said.

He also clarified an earlier statement he gave the *Saipan Tribune,* saying the new fee will not be used to facilitate and process F-1 visas, although NMC is authorized by the federal government to enroll foreign students through the process and issuance of I-20 forms. He said the processing or issuance of F-1 visas is a function of USCIS.

In the months ahead, according to Pangelinan, students should expect to see space on campus equipped with resource materials and staff to address the needs of international students.

Nike, GM eyed to invest in NMI

» Today's joint House, Senate leadership meeting postponed

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

House Ways and Means Committee chair Ray Basa (Cov-Saipan) said yesterday that part of his pro-active stance in helping to grow the CNMI economy is formally write to Nike, General Motors, computer or computer part manufacturers and other internationally known brands to set up business on the islands.

"It doesn't hurt to try to entice these international manufacturers," said Basa.

The freshman lawmaker added that he will follow up on earlier plans to entice garment manufacturers to set up shop on Saipan, this time mainly to manufacture garment for the U.S. military.

Basa said Saipan already has the facilities, as well as the manpower, to establish a smaller-scale garment industry. Saipan used to have some 30 garment factories manufacturing products for brands such as Levi's, Gap, Guess, Abercrombie & Fitch, and Polo Ralph Lauren.

Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan (Ind-MP) could also help the CNMI, he said, by tapping federal agencies that could provide technical assistance to CNMI's existing and would-be entrepreneurs.

Postponed leadership meeting

The planned joint Senate and House leadership meeting today has been postponed.

Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) confirmed that the Senate has asked for the postponement because most senators won't be able to attend as a result of prior commitments.

Manglona said he asked House Speaker Eli Cabrera (R-Saipan) to reschedule the joint meeting next week.

At the planned meeting, both camps are expected to identify priority bills and initiatives that need to be passed this year.

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OPA: Probe on IPS contract key to keeping public confidence

» Extension of almost $400K contract with IPS 'not anticipated at this time'

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Public Auditor Michael Pai told Gov. Benigno R. Fitial that an ongoing ethics investigation into the almost $400,000 sole-source ARRA management contract with Integrated Professional Solutions is important in "preserving and maintaining the public's confidence in the CNMI government."

Pai was responding to Fitial's Dec. 27 letter wherein the governor told the Office of the Public Auditor to remove itself from any role re-investigating the award of the ARRA management contract.

Fitial blamed the public auditor for failing to raise ethical concerns back in October 2010 when the governor asked him to review the possible sole-source contract for OPA clearance.

Pai, in a Dec. 30 letter, a copy of which was obtained yesterday, said OPA is reviewing the governor's letter "and the allegations it contains." He said OPA will respond to the governor's letter upon completion of its review.

Pai, an appointee of Fitial, also indicated the significance of the ongoing ethics investigation.

"This investigation serves an important function in preserving and maintaining the public's confidence in the CNMI government," Pai told Fitial. "Please note that this investigation is confidential. You have been informed of it for the limited purpose of carrying out OPA's duties and responsibilities."

Press secretary Angel Demapan said yesterday that the letter from OPA "does not warrant a response from the governor" because he said it is "simply notifying the governor that his concerns are being reviewed."

When asked whether the Fitial administration will extend IPS' contract, which expires in April 2012, Demapan said "an extension is not anticipated at this time."

"The sole-source contract was for a specific purpose and timeline," he said.

The CNMI has been awarded over $119 million in ARRA money from Feb. 17, 2009, through Sept. 30, 2011.

Based on federal tracking agency recovery.gov data, the CNMI has been awarded the least amount of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act money among 50 states and five territories, but Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan (Ind-MP) said the CNMI actually gets the most per capita because of its small population.

"The U.S. national average for ARRA money is $899 per capita. The CNMI gets over $2,200 per capita," Sablan earlier said.

Most of this ARRA money is managed by Ada's firm IPS, following the Fitial administration's award of a $392,406 sole-source contract.

A July 2011 investigative report from the Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of the Interior found that the IPS sole-source contract to manage ARRA funds that the CNMI receives may have violated CNMI Procurement and Supply regulations and may have broken several CNMI ethics rules.

Prior to the routing of the proposed ARRA management contract, Fitial wrote to Pai on Sept. 23, 2010, to request clearance from OPA because, among other things, the proposed contractor at the time was the outgoing Commerce secretary whose duties included monitoring ARRA funds.

Fitial told Pai in December that his Oct. 7, 2010, response to the governor's letter raised no ethics issues. The governor said it's clear that OPA failed to provide him with a sound ethical assessment during the contract review process.

"Accordingly, OPA is conflicted from undertaking an investigation into 'ethics' violations when it was OPA's failure, at the outset, to raise ethical issues that substantively contributed to contract approval by other agencies of the Commonwealth government," Fitial told Pai.

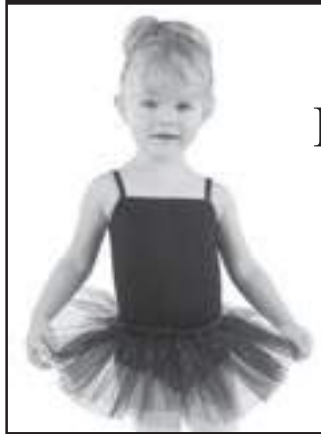
The governor instead asked Pai to explain to him and the Legislature OPA's failure to identify in October 2010 ethical issues related to the ARRA contract.

The Senate told OPA last year to further investigate the contract award, saying that the U.S. Interior's Inspector General July 2011 report is not definitive in its conclusion.

The Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Governmental Investigations had also asked the CNMI Bar Association to investigate Attorney General Edward Buckingham for his involvement in a delegate candidate's campaign gathering in 2010 and his approval of a sole-source ARRA management contract to former Commerce secretary Michael Ada's firm IPS.

Sen. Frank Cruz (R-Tinian), EAGI chair, said they have yet to receive a report from the Bar Association as of yesterday afternoon.

Glushko's Academy of Performing Arts



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FOR VIOLATING PROBATION CONDITIONS

9-month sentence sought for ex-CRM official

U.S. Probation has recommended a nine-month prison sentence against former Coastal Resources Management official Benny K. Pangelinan for violating his supervised release conditions.

U.S. District Court for the NMI visiting judge David O. Carter had found Pangelinan in violation of two conditions of his probation. A hearing will be held today on the U.S. government's motion to revoke Pangelinan's probation.

In Monday's hearing, Carter determined that Pangelinan violated a special condition that requires him not to commit any federal, state, or local crimes. Pangelinan was also found in violation of a standard condition that requires him to answer truthfully to all questions by a probation officer and follow the officer's instructions.

Carter said that today's hearing will tackle restitution for victims who testified in court, reiterating the condition of no access to the Internet, staying away order from the victims, and the location of Pangelinan's jail facility and what medical treatment is available for him.

A federal jury had found Pangelinan guilty of five wire fraud charges in January 2007, for defrauding potential investors and his involvement in several Internet scams. He was sentenced to three years and a month in prison and ordered to pay $129,250 in restitution to five victims. After serving his sentence, he was placed on three years of supervised release.

In September last year, the U.S. Probation Office had filed a petition to revoke his supervised release for violating his probation conditions. Probation Officer Gregory Arriola said that Pangelinan borrowed a total of $21,450 from a couple and received over $11,000 from a family member, with promises to both that he will double their money.

Arriola said that they caught Pangelinan sending money through wire to a person he claimed to be his girlfriend in Australia whom he met only in the Internet.

Attorney Steven Pixley is the court-appointed counsel for Pangelinan. Assistant U.S. attorney Garth Backe is representing the U.S. government in the case. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

FACEBOOK

From Page 1

secret Facebook group named 'Stop Kilili.' There have been postings within this group about whether I have paid my wife money from my congressional budget, the Member Representational Allowance. The answer is an unequivocal 'no,'" said Sablan.

"Furthermore, it is uncalled for to attack the integrity of my wife," Sablan said. "Andrea is not the one serving in public office. She is a hard-working employee of an established, highly regarded private company [on] Saipan, which is her only source of a paycheck. My wife is a decent and honest human being. She does not deserve to be attacked by these individuals."

At the same time, Sablan encouraged anyone with knowledge of a violation of federal or CNMI government ethics laws to take the matter immediately to the appropriate authorities.

"We all understand why people in the Northern Marianas have grown suspicious of the integrity of their public officials. I encourage everyone who has any evidence of corruption to bring it to the attention of law enforcement officials.

"Anyone can hide behind a cloak of cowardice in secret Internet rooms, trading in unfounded, false rumors. But the real way for us to clean up our government is to use the law—and the power of the ballot box," he said.

Federal law provides a high degree of protection for the public against government officials hiring family members. One law, 5 USC Section 3110, expressly forbids the hiring of a relative by a public official, such as a member of Congress, in the office or agency over which that official has jurisdiction or in which he serves. The law defines "relative" to include wives and husbands.

The House of Representatives' Code of Official Conduct also states that a member, delegate, or resident commissioner may not retain his or her spouse in a paid position. In addition, every employee of the House of Representatives must sign an affidavit stating that they have no prohibited family relationship to their employer or to any current member of Congress. ***(PR)***

DHS

From Page 1

Betsy Markey, DHS assistant secretary for the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, told Rep. Froilan Tenorio (Cov-Saipan) in a letter that CBP takes seriously allegations of employee misconduct and has instituted policies pertaining to abuses of authority.

Tenorio wrote an Oct. 18 letter to DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano, and DHS' Markey, a former member of the U.S. Congress, wrote a Dec. 21 response.

Tenorio, however, got a copy of DHS' response letter only yesterday.

"I am satisfied with their response, and I am thankful that they responded," Tenorio told *Saipan Tribune*. "We might be the smallest member of the American family but they found time to respond to our concerns. It also goes to show they understand the importance of the tourism industry. Tourism does not play a major role; it plays the 'only' role. Without tourism, we're dead. Everything here depends on tourism."

Tenorio, a former governor and House speaker, suggested in October a "retraining" for federal officers and that "new employees be taught how to carry out their duties both effectively and pleasantly."

DHS' Markey, in her two-page letter, said DHS understands that tourism plays an important role in the CNMI economy.

"CBP management at SPN [Saipan] is actively coordinating with the Marianas Visitors Authority to enhance the visitors' processing experience. In addition, CBP will conduct cultural sensitivity training sessions for the CBP officers stationed at Saipan," Markey told Tenorio.

U.S. Public Law 110-229, signed in May 2008, placed CNMI immigration under federal control. The actual implementation was on Nov. 28, 2009, with DHS and its component units as the lead agency.

Markey also assured Tenorio that it is not DHS' intent to subject any traveler to unwarranted scrutiny. She said DHS strives to always uphold the law while respecting the dignity of citizens of all countries with whom it interacts.

"Each traveler is entitled to the utmost courtesy and professionalism that can be offered within the limits of our enforcement responsibilities. CBP also encourages all travelers who may be dissatisfied with their CBP processing to speak with an onsite supervisor. A supervisor is always available to address any concerns," Markey added.

One of the CBP managers stationed on Saipan, when asked whether CBP officers on Saipan have already undergone cultural sensitivity training, said he cannot make any comment to the media. He referred media inquiries to a public relations officer out of San Francisco, California yesterday afternoon.

Tenorio is just one of the CNMI government officials who called DHS' attention to the way DHS has been processing passengers arriving at the Saipan airport.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, Senate Vice President Jude Hofschneider (R-Tinian), and other lawmakers raised similar concerns with DHS officials.

Press secretary Angel Demapan separately said yesterday afternoon that when the governor met with CBP officials in Washington, D.C. last year, he was also informed that such training sessions would be conducted.

"However, the governor is not aware that such sessions have been conducted. Obviously, if adequate training was provided, the CNMI should not have received numerous complaints from visitors," Demapan told *Saipan Tribune* in an email response.

Demapan said the governor received a response letter from CBP last year, saying that the agency would look into the governor's concerns. Fitial wrote to CBP deputy commissioner David V. Aguilar in May 2011.

Back in May, CBP responded to lawmakers' complaints of long lines, delays, and "callous demeanor" of CBP officers at the Saipan airport by saying that they will look into specific concerns raised and that "computer systems suffered a connectivity failure" after the initial passenger processing began in the early morning hours of April 16, 2011. CBP said this prolonged the wait time for passengers and airline crew to be processed.

CNMI senators, who were among arriving passengers at the time, alleged that arriving airline passengers and crew had to wait for 15 minutes at the Saipan airport just so CBP officers can "warm up" their computers.

They said this was in addition to the 10 to 15 minutes processing of each passenger, which they said "is not acceptable." They also pointed to the "callous treatment" of airline crew and passengers arriving at the Saipan airport by CBP officers.

LAWSUIT

From Page 1

Supreme Court to certify a legal question, and the Superior Court has original jurisdiction of the case, he will hear the matter pending the high court's review.

Article 4, Section 2 of the CNMI Constitution states that "whenever a dispute arises between or among Commonwealth officials who are elected by the people or appointed by the governor regarding the exercise of their powers or responsibilities…the parties to the dispute may certify to the Supreme Court the legal question raised, setting forth the stipulated facts upon which the dispute arises."

Govendo said that Buckingham and Larson have stated in court that they do not wish to certify any legal question to the Supreme Court.

Govendo pointed out that one of the requirements of Article 4, Section 2 is for both parties to petition the Supreme Court to certify their legal question.

"Since plaintiffs do not intend to certify any legal question, the mandatory constitutional prerequisites will not be satisfied and the Supreme Court will decline to hear the matter," Govendo pointed out.

He also determined that the complaint against Pai has sufficiently alleged facts to support claims for invalid and unenforceable contracts.

"Therefore the motion to dismiss for failure to state a claim is denied," he said.

Buckingham and Larson sued Pai in June 2011 for hiring two lawyers that they said "threaten[s] an imminent waste of public funds."

According to court records, the Office of the Attorney General received on Jan. 4, 2011, a contract for legal services to be provided by attorney Brian McMahon for OPA. The justification was that this contract would provide for a second lawyer within OPA. McMahon was understood to be the OPA's second lawyer as Nancy Gottfried was its first lawyer.

Buckingham approved the contract on Jan. 7, 2011.

The OAG then learned that OPA had hired a third lawyer—Joseph Pryzuski—in November 2010.

The OAG provided OPA with detailed descriptions of contract errors and omissions, and provided it an opportunity to explain, comment, and correct the errors.

According to the OAG, OPA asserted a unilateral claim of power, that its contracts need not be reviewed by the OAG and need not be approved by the governor.

In their lawsuit, Buckingham and Larson argue that the contracts for McMahon and Pryzuski are invalid and unenforceable.

They contend that McMahon's contract is invalid as Pai did not provide sufficient justification for it. They also allege that justification for McMahon's contract contains false statements that OPA was hiring a second attorney when in fact Pryzuski has already been hired.

They asserted that Pryzuski's contract was not received nor reviewed by the OAG or the Office of the Governor; therefore, the contract was invalid because it was not processed according to the standards of the CNMI Excepted Service Personnel Regulations.

They wanted the court to declare that the contracts for McMahon and Pryzuski are invalid and unenforceable because OPA failed to comply with the requirements of the CNMI Procurement Regulations and the CNMI Excepted Service Personnel Regulations.

Pai, through counsel Sean Frink, filed the motion asking the court to dismiss the complaint for lack of jurisdiction over the subject matter.

In denying Pai's motion, Govendo said the statute states that the Superior Court has original jurisdiction over all civil actions.

"This is a civil action. Therefore, defendant will not succeed in dismissing the complaint for lack of jurisdiction over the subject matter," Govendo said.

FOOD STAMP

From Page 1

who requested anonymity, told *Saipan Tribune* that upon receiving her CW receipt yesterday, she immediately informed the Nutrition Assistance Program office so she could avail of her children's pending assistance. She usually gets $376 worth of food stamp for her children.

"They told me to come today and try if I can get the checks for my children," she said.

She said she was first informed about the need to submit a CW permit or receipt when she renewed her children's application for food stamp benefits on Dec. 14.

Mercedes Apritado, 47, was also lining up for her two children's food stamp vouchers, usually amounting to $132. She was told of the CW receipt requirement when she renewed her children's application on Dec. 13. She was petitioned for a CW-2 permit by her husband and was ready to file the document with NAP yesterday.

Marlyn Surima, 40, said she's waiting for the January voucher for her four children, which amounts to $334. Because she filed the necessary documents as early as December, she was able to get the benefits on time. She feels sorry, however, for those who were not able to provide the necessary document as that would hold up their check assistance.

A mother of three children who has been getting food stamps since 1998 said she is deeply saddened by the situation of some of her friends and acquaintances who continue to be barred from getting the assistance they need because of the new requirement.

She disclosed that since the CW receipt or permit was included among the NAP requirements, many foreign-born parents of U.S. citizen children have opted not to avail of the assistance for fear that they will be referred by the local agency to the federal government. These parents are now considered out of status.

She is convinced that, based on the listings of qualified recipients posted at the local office, there will be a large drop in the number of beneficiaries until the end of the fiscal year.

A food stamp case worker confirmed last week that many checks for December are pending due to the non-submission of CW receipts or permits. This was later denied by Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Secretary Melvin Faisao, who blamed the government's austerity measures for the delay in the issuance of checks. Faisao failed to respond yesterday to *Saipan Tribune* inquiries—both phone calls and emails—about some food stamp issues.

Food stamp vouchers are issued every first week of each month to low-income households.

DFW burglarized twice over weekend

» $20K worth of items stolen

The Division of Fish & Wildlife in Lower Base was burglarized twice over the weekend and an estimated $20,000 worth of items were stolen.

Police officer Jason Tarkong said yesterday that police learned of the first burglary on Sunday. DFW however, was burglarized again that night. Tarkong said the second police report was filed on Monday.

The burglar or burglars managed to enter the DFW building through a sliding glass window. Padlocks on several lockers were cut.

The stolen items were from within the building and warehouse area, according to police.

The stolen items include four red metal tool boxes that contained tools, one Toro electric blower, one Kawasaki bush cutter, three fishing rods, one Dewalt cordless drill, one Makita circular saw, and three digital Panasonic/Sony cameras.

Also stolen were one Lenovo computer, one Sony Vaio laptop, one drill press, three scuba regulators (scuba pro and aqua lung), one Arc welder, and a large white ice chest.

Tarkong said the incidents were actually the second and the third burglary cases at DFW in the past few weeks. He has no details about the first incident.

"The Department of Public Safety and the NMI Crime Stoppers Program are seeking help from the public for information," said Tarkong, who is also the Crime Stoppers coordinator. Crime Stoppers pays up to $1,000 for any information leading to an arrest. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

IF CPUC CEASES TO OPERATE ON JAN. 29

'CUC cannot have rate adjustments'

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has no authority on its own to adjust its rates without permission from the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission, so the commission's possible shutdown would hobble any plans to increase or lower rates, according to CUC officials.

Deputy executive director Alan Fletcher and chief financial officer Charles Warren are optimistic, however, that Gov. Benigno R. Fitial will soon appoint new PUC commissioners to allow the commission to continue to run.

The commission currently has only Viola Alepuyo as its commissioner and is allowed to operate for just 60 days; after that it must shut down until the appointment of new commissioners. Any such appointment would require Senate confirmation.

The expiration of the 60-day period is on Jan. 29. This can only be extended for 30 days by the governor.

The commission must have at least five members. Alepuyo was the only one left following the resignation of other members. As of yesterday, appointments have yet to be made by the Executive Branch.

Fletcher and Warren told *Saipan Tribune* that, without a functioning commission, changes in the rates could only be possible through legislation and executive order from the governor in case of emergencies.

In analyzing the bigger impact to CUC, the two support the continuing process being conducted by the commission.

"Without a functioning PUC, we don't have the ability to change rates on our own. The unfortunate side of our business is: we have to charge for our services. We're just hoping that this [after Jan. 29] will not result in any problems," said Fletcher, emphasizing the importance of keeping PUC functioning.

Prior to its possible closure on Jan. 29, the commission is expected to decide on several CUC issues, including rate hike proposals for water and wastewater, possible reduction in levelized energy adjustment clause, and other issues.

"If something awful happens without the CPUC, obviously we will have to go to the Legislature. Depending on the situation, if it's a dying emergency, we would need the governor's assistance through an emergency order," Warren told *Saipan Tribune*.

CUC does not want to go that route as much as possible, he added.

No CNMI delegate to Pacific arts fest

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture has decided that it will not be sending a CNMI delegation to the 11th Festival of Pacific Arts in the Solomon Islands this July.

Executive director Angel S. Hocog said yesterday that the Arts Council made its final decision after several meetings with a number of registered visual and performing artists who expressed interest in participating in the festival.

Hocog disclosed that a major factor in their decision is the lack of funds to send even at least a few registered artists from the CNMI.

"It is unfortunate that the CNMI will not have a delegation to the 11th Festival of Pacific Arts. The government does not have enough funding to shoulder the expenses for the artists' airfares," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Although Solomon Islands, the host island, will finance the accommodations for the CNMI delegates, Hocog noted that the Council could not find a local sponsor for the delegates' airline tickets.

Each delegate would need about $3,000 for airfare.

This would be the second time that the Commonwealth will not be represented at the traveling festival.

Established by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community in 1972, the Festival of Pacific Arts is hosted by a different country in Oceania every four years to stem erosion of traditional cultural practices by sharing and exchanging cultures.

This year's theme is "Culture in Harmony with Nature."

The last the time the CNMI sent a delegation to the Festival of Pacific Arts was in 2004 in Koror, Palau. It missed the 10th year of the festival held in American Samoa in 2008.

Hocog remains optimistic that the Council, in collaboration with the local government, will be able to send a CNMI delegation to Guam in 2016 for the 12th Festival of Pacific Arts.

3 road projects in design phase

Seven contractors have submitted proposals for three new road design projects of the Department of Public Works.

Highway administrator Sonya Pangelinan Dancoe said yesterday that these projects are the road and drainage improvement and hazard elimination on Beach Road from American Memorial Park to San Antonio; hazard elimination on Routes 21, 24, and 27 on Tinian; and the road improvement design on Route 11 on Rota.

Dancoe said the Tinian project involves stripping or putting lane dividers and regulatory signs as well as the improvement of road intersections.

The Rota project will improve the design of the 2.7-mile road. Dancoe described this project as "a little bit challenging" given the "critical wildlife and habitat issues" involved.

Dancoe noted that they are now in the process of evaluating the firms' design proposals. "Design evaluation takes much longer because there's a lot of negotiations involved in terms of the project's scope," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

The projects are projected to be awarded by the end of February.

Meanwhile, three ongoing road design projects have reached 30-percent completion, said Dancoe. These are the road designs for the Tun Segundo traffic system by the post office, Route 36 from Bird Island to Kingfisher, and hazard elimination for Route 10 on Rota. ***(Clarissa V. David)***

Commonwealth I Sankattan Siha Na Islas Mariana
Ofisinan I Gubietno
Dipåttamenton I Tano' Pupbliku

NOTICE OF PROPOSED LEASE OF PUBLIC LAND

In accordance with Section 106 (b) of Public Law 15-2, the Department of Public Lands hereby gives notice of its intent to lease certain public lands in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Any interested parties of the general public may submit comments, data, views, or arguments of alternative proposals for the lease of the public land. As further provided by Public Law 15-2, the following pertinent information is required to be published.

i. The proposed lease of public land is described as Lot No. 094 D 03, containing an area of approximately 951 square meters, more or less, situated in Garapan, Saipan. A copy of the location of the parcel is available at the Department of Public Lands for inspection.

ii. The prospective lessee is Man Bao Corporation, a CNMI Corporation. The Directors of the Corporation are Cheung, Pingyin and Yuan, Beihua.

The President/Treasurer of the Corporation is Cheung, Pingyin and the Vice-President/Secretary is Yuan, Beihua.

iii. The proposed lease was negotiated by Mr. Antonio Rasiang.

iv. The lessee shall use the premises solely for the purpose of developing and managing a facility with several business activities such as tour agency, a restaurant, a car rental, automobile repair shop, and related operations.

The term of the proposed lease agreement is 25 years, with an option to extend the lease for an additional 15 years.

The proposed annual rental during the term is based on a percentage of the appraised fair market value of the property, including existing structure(s).

v. A copy of the proposed lease agreement may be obtained at the office of the Department of Public Lands, located on the 2nd floor of the Joeten Dandan Commercial Building in Dandan, Saipan; Songsong Village, Rota; or the 1st floor of the Kings Commercial Building, Tinian.

vi. The Department of Public Lands has received no alternative proposals to lease the subject public land in Garapan, Saipan.

vii. The Secretary of the Department of Public Lands shall accept written comments, views, arguments or alternative proposals from interested parties on or before January 26, 2012 at the Department of Public Lands offices located in Saipan, Rota or Tinian.

NUTISIA PUT MAPROPONIN INEKSTENDIN INATKILON TANU' PUPBLIKU

Sigun gi Seksiona 106(b) gi Lain Pupbliku 15-2, i Dipattamentun Tånu' Pupbliku guini ha nå'i nutisia ni intensionña para u mana'ma'atkila pumalu na tånu' pupbliku siha giya Saipan, Commonwealth gi Sangkattan na Islas Marianas siha. Maseha håyi na pattida siha gi halum i pupbliku henerått siña ha na'hålum i imfotmasion, opiñon, pat testamoñun kinentra siha gi tinahguin propositu siha ni para i atkilon tånu' pupbliku. Sigi mås mo'na mapribeniyi ginin i Lain Pupbliku 15-2, i tinattitiyi pettanesin imfotmasion ni madimånda ni debi na u mapupblika.

i. I maproponi na atkilon tånu' pupbliku ha diskribi kumu Lot No. Lot No. 094 D)3, ni kinonsisti åria kåsi guaha 951 square meters, mås pat menus, ni gaigi giya Garapan, Saipan. I kopian i lugåt gaigi gi pumalu na gumuaha gi Dipattamentun Tånu' Pupbliku siha ni para i rikunosimientu.

ii. I manatkikila i Man Bao Corporation, CNMI Corporation. I Direktot i Corporation siha si Cheung, Pingyin yan si Yuan Beihua.

I Presidenti /Tresureru gi Corporation si Cheung, Pingyin yan i Sigundu Presidenti/Sekritåriu si Yuan, Beihua.

iii. I maproponi na atkilon manigosiu gi as Siñot Antonio Rasiang.

iv. I manatkikila debi na u usa o lugåt solamienti para hinangai developing yan managing facility yan pulu aktibidåt bisnis siha tåtkumu our agency, sagan chumotchu, atkilon kareta, shop manareklan tumobit.

I teman i maproponi na kuntråtan atkilon sa' 25 åñus, yan option para u ma'ekstendi i atkilon gi ta'lu 15 åñus.

I maproponi na åpas atkilon gi sakkan gi durântin i tema sigun gi percentage gi appraised fair market value gi propiedåt, ingklusu i prisenti na estroktura.

v. Kopian i manmaproponi na kontråtan atkilon siña machuli' gi ufisinan i Dipattamentun Tånu' Pupbliku siha, gaigi gi sigundu bibienda 2nd floor gi Joeten Dandan Commercial Building giya Dandan, Saipan; gi Songsong Village, Luta; pat i primet 1st bibienda gi Kings Commercial Building, Tinian.

vi. I Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbliku siha tåya' na ha risibi tinahguin propositu siha para sinuhetun atkilon tanu' pupbliku siha giya Garapan, Saipan.

vii. I Sekritåriun i Dipattamentun Tanu' Pupbliku siha debi na u aksepta i tinigi' i imfotmasion, opiñon yan testamoñun kinentra pat tinahguin propositu siha ginin i manggai interes na pattida siha gi pat åntis di Ineru 26, 2012 gi ufisinan Dipattamentun Tånu' Pupbliku siha ni gaigi Saipan, Luta, pat Tinian.

ARONGORONG REEL POMWOL AKKILONUL FALÚWEER TOULAP

Sángi Tálil ye 106(b) mellól Alléghul Toulap 15-2, Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap, ekke atotoowow ammataf igha ebwe akkilaaló eghús falúw mellól Seipel, Commonwealth Téél Falúwasch Marianas. Schóókka remuschál emwal rebwe isisilong yaar mángemáng , data awewee, me angiingi reel pomwol akkilonul falúweer toulap. Sengi Alléghul Toulap ye 15-2, ebwal ayoora, lamal awewee kka rebwe mweiti ngáli milikka ebwe akkatéélo.

i. Pomwol akkilonul falúweer toulap nge ekke bwáári Lot No. 094 D. 03, eyoor tiwabwughúw limeigh me eew laapal(951 square meters) elapeló me ngáre eghús, elo Arabwal, Seipel. Tilighial bwuley yeel nge eyoor mereel Bwulasiyool Falúweer Toulap (Public Lands) ngáre óubwe ghuley fischiy.

ii. Schéschéél schóól akkilón nge Man Bao, eew CNMI Corporation. Schóól assamwoolul Coporation nge Cheung, Pingyin , me Yuan, Beihua.

Samwoolul/Treseróru (President/Treasurer) Coporation nge Cheung, Pingyin me aruschayúl Samwool/Sekkretaria (Vice President/Secretary) nge Yuan, Beihua.

iii. Schóól aweweey akkilon yel nge Mr. Antonio Rasiang.

iv. Schóól akkilon ebwe yááyá falúw yeel rel ebwe ayoora me lemeli eew facilidóód il business rel tour agency, leliyal mwungo(restaurant), car rental, ferúl ghareta (automobile repair shop) me bwal akkaw mwóghutughut.

Tool aighúghúl pomwol akkilon nge reweigh me limoow ráágh (25 years). Emmwel rebwe bwal sóóbwey ngáli seigh me limoow ráágh (15 years).

Pomwol méél akkilon nge ebwe mwiril sángi percentage il yaal appraised fair market value il falúw, me bwal meta kka e akkayu llól bwuley yeel.

v. Tilighial akkilon yeel nge emmwel óubwe bwughi merel bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap, elo aruwowal pwó (2nd floor) me Joeten Dandan Commercial Building llól Tuturam, Seipél; Songsong village, Luuta; me ngáre mmwal pwó (1st floor) mellól Kings Commercial Building, Tchúlúyól.

vi. Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap nge esáál bweibwogh mwo pomwol akkilon ye elo Arabwal, Seipél.

vii. Samwoolul Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap nge ebwe bwughi ischil mángemáng, aingiingil merel amweyút mmwal Eneero (January) 26, 2012 mellól Bwulasiyool Ammwelil Falúweer Toulap iye elo Seipél, Luuta, Tchúlúyól.

Kilili lauds choice of Muñoz to lead Domestic Policy Council

CNMI Delegate Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan applauded yesterday the news that President Obama has selected Cecilia Muñoz to be director of the President's Domestic Policy Council.

Muñoz is co-chair of the Interagency Group on Insular Affairs along with Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. She also serves as Special Assistant to the President and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs.

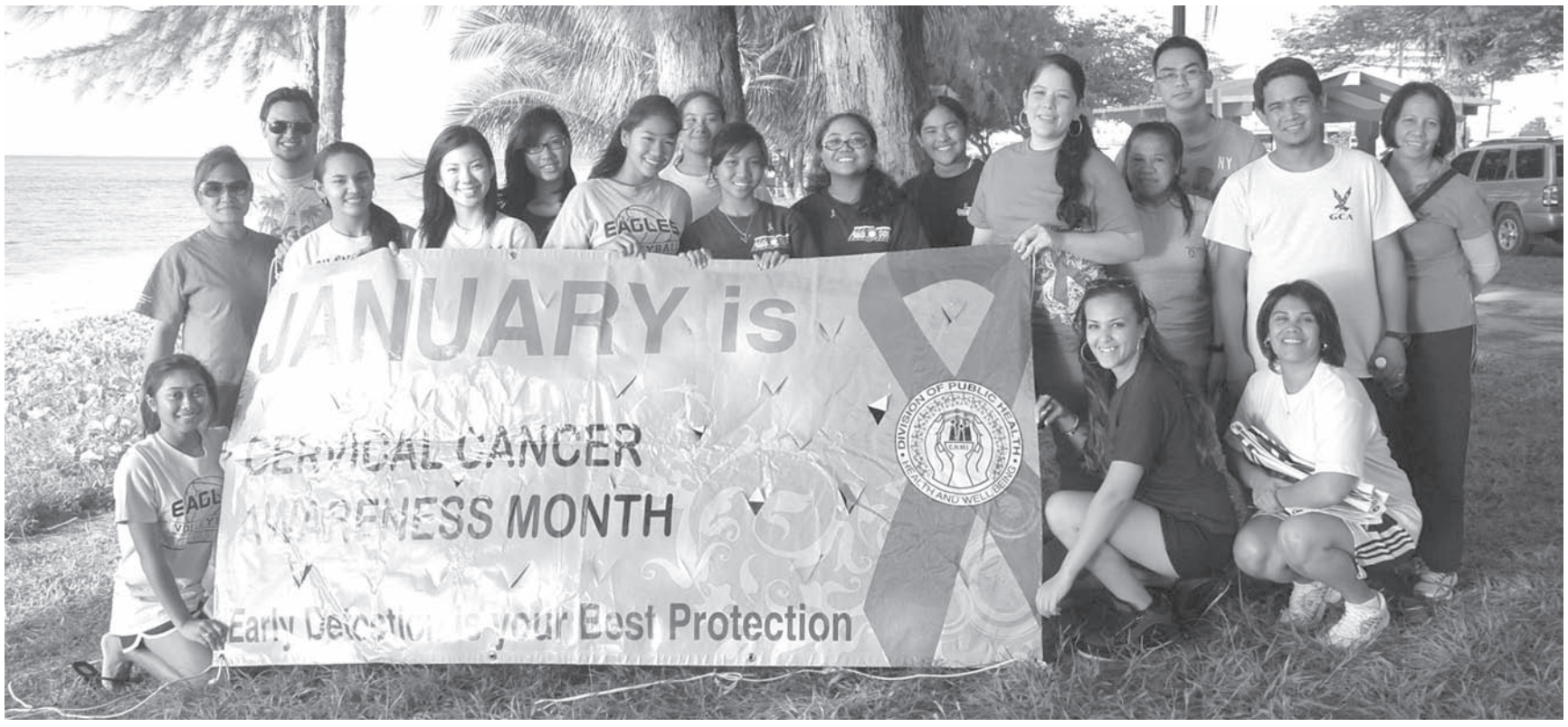
"President Obama has made a fine choice in selecting Cecilia Muñoz to head his Domestic Policy Council," said Sablan. "Ms. Muñoz has been very accessible and responsive on issues related to the Northern Mariana Islands in her capacity as co-chair of the Interagency Group on Insular Affairs and as director for Intergovernmental Affairs. I look forward to continuing that relationship as she takes on her new and broader responsibilities assisting the President in executing the policies that affect all American families."

Sablan has worked with Muñoz on health care issues and first learned that the President had agreed to support inclusion of the insular areas in the landmark healthcare reform legislation in a meeting with Muñoz at the White House.

Muñoz also helped Sablan influence the Department of Homeland Security decision to allow Russian and Chinese tourists to continue to enter the Northern Mariana Islands after the transition to federal immigration control had begun, a policy that has been critical to the Northern Marianas tourism industry. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Interior Assistant Secretary Anthony M. Babauta, Guam Delegate Madeleine Z. Bordallo, former Guam governor Carlos Camacho, Special Assistant to the President Cecilia Muñoz, and CNMI Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan at the annual Interagency Group on Insular Affairs meeting, which Muñoz co-chairs.



CLARISSA V. DAVID

Participants in the Cervical Cancer Awareness Walk pose for a group photo at their starting point by the Oleai Pavilion yesterday afternoon. Over 20 individuals took part in the first of a series of awareness walks scheduled for the month in celebration of Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. Yesterday's walk was sponsored by the Grace Christian Academy volleyball team.

Cervical cancer awareness walks kick off

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Over 20 individuals took part in the Cervical Cancer Awareness Walk sponsored by the Grace Christian Academy volleyball team yesterday.

Participants walked from Oleai Pavilion to the old Japanese tank across from Quartermaster Road and back and received either a free shirt or water bottles. Educational flyers and brochures about cervical cancer were also given out to participants at the pavilion.

Yesterday's walk was the first of the several awareness walks scheduled this month as part of the celebration of Cervical Cancer Awareness Month.

"Let's fight cervical cancer together," said Kimberly Sablan, Cervical Cancer Awareness Month Committee chair.

Sablan emphasized that early detection through screening is key to preventing cervical cancer and all other types of cancer. She encouraged women in the community to visit their physicians and get a Pap test.

Sablan said they have the breast and cervical screening programs for women age 21 years or older. Screenings are free for those who meet income guidelines and requirements.

For younger females, Sablan said they promote the human papillomavirus or HPV vaccine to girls as young as 9 years old.

"Getting the HPV vaccine at an early age helps prevent cancer, that's why we promote it to high school students," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

The HPV outreach program among female high school students in the CNMI is scheduled to begin within the month.

Besides screening tests, Sablan said that having a healthy lifestyle by eating nutritious food, being physically active through exercise, and not smoking or quitting smoking also help prevent cancer.

Eleventh-grader Aira Batallones, co-captain of the GCA volleyball team, said she attended the walk with her teammates to become more aware about cervical cancer.

Batallones, 16, said that she plans to avail of the HPV vaccine once it becomes available. She urged other high school students to get the vaccine and become physically active to remain healthy. "You have to work out to build your muscles and stamina," she added.

Another awareness walk, scheduled on Jan. 18, will be sponsored by 2011 Liberation Queen Joni C. Castro.

Dela Cruz joins technical team at DPW

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Public Works welcomed 2012 with one new staffer to fill in a newly created key position under the Technical Services Division.

Geralyn C. Dela Cruz began her new job as a planning and real estate specialist in December.

Dela Cruz earned her bachelor's degree in Biology from the Chaminade University in Hawaii and is working on her master's degree in public health from the University of Hawaii.

Dela Cruz left Saipan at 16 and moved to Guam where she stayed for two years. She then moved to Hawaii where she stayed for 11 years.

Dela Cruz became a licensed real estate agent in Hawaii where she was most recently employed as commercial property manager by Colliers Monroe Friedlander, the largest real estate company in the island state.

"I've always wanted to come home," Dela Cruz told *Saipan Tribune*. "I was very blessed to be offered this position at DPW. I'm excited with my new job and I'm excited to be back home."

Dela Cruz disclosed that her main responsibility as planning and real estate specialist is to acquire lands for federal projects in relation to the CNMI's first Right-of-Way Manual, which establishes policies and procedures for the acquisition, compensation, management, and maintenance of designated public right-of-ways to be implemented by DPW.

The manual is based on the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies or Uniform Act of 1970 and seeks to improve the project development process and provide opportunities for additional funding eligibility for roadway infrastructure projects under the current federal-aid highway program.

Dela Cruz said the manual is now in its final review by their legal counsel, assistant attorney general James Kearney, before it is submitted to FHWA for approval.

"Once the manual is done, it's something I will be administering and will allow us to request for federal funds to acquire properties," said Dela Cruz, adding that she is also tasked to manage properties acquired through federal monies.

DPW highway administrator Sonya Pangelinan Dancoe said yesterday that Dela Cruz's position was among the positions approved by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration, which provides most of the funding for DPW road projects in the CNMI.

Dancoe and DPW Secretary Martin C. Sablan welcomed Dela Cruz to the team, saying that her extensive background in real estate will ensure the implementation of the manual and provide strong leadership to the agency.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Department of Public Works Secretary Martin C. Sablan, standing second left, is joined by staffers led by highway administrator Sonya Pangelinan Dancoe, seated right, for a holiday souvenir photo. Also in photo is planning and real estate specialist Geralyn C. Dela Cruz, seated left, who joined the team last December.

Coast Guard reminds mariners to be cautious of high surf

APRA HARBOR, Guam—Coast Guard Sector Guam warns boaters and beach goers to exercise caution in all waters across Micronesia through the weekend. The National Weather Service has issued a high surf and small craft advisory for all coastal waters surrounding Guam, Rota, Tinian, and Saipan.

Beginning today, surf is predicted to build 10 feet or greater in Guam, Rota, Tinian, and Saipan. Areas around east facing reefs will be especially hazardous with seas expected to build up to 13 feet through Friday.

A small craft advisory is also in effect for all the islands until Friday. Seas are anticipated to remain above 10 feet and winds are expected to remain in excess of 20-25 knots creating waves along affected reefs higher than normal, making it exceptionally dangerous for small vessels and swimmers. The National Weather Service recommends mariners operating small vessels should avoid operating in these conditions.

ON THE NET
- Safety equipment requirements: http://www.uscgboating.org/
- National Weather Service: http://www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Mariners should only travel if necessary and check the current and forecasted weather conditions prior to getting underway. These conditions are especially hazardous when entering or leaving harbors and near inlets and reef lines. Mariners should remain aware of changing conditions once on the water. Coast Guard Sector Guam advises mariners: if in doubt, don't go out!

Boaters are strongly encouraged to have a VHF marine radio on board to monitor weather conditions, communicate with other mariners and call for help in the event of an emergency. The Coast Guard reminds all mariners that channel 16 is the emergency channel and is monitored around-the-clock.

In addition, marinas and local boaters are reminded to check that boats in port are properly secured, bilge pumps are functional, and all loose items are removed from decks. Report any boats adrift, pollution, or other maritime emergencies to the Coast Guard Sector Guam Command Center at 671-564-USCG. ***(USCG)***

SAFETY FIRST

Before you take to the water, Coast Sector Guam advises mariners to consider the following:
- Leave a float plan with a responsible individual who knows your intentions, location and who they should call if you do not return as scheduled.
- Always have flares and other visual distress signals on board. Inspect them regularly; they can save your life and help rescuers find you at night should you be in distress.
- Wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket and set the example for your passengers or paddling partners. Before getting underway, verify you have enough life jackets for everyone on board.
- Maintain awareness on the water—be aware of activity around your vessel including changing weather, and always know your location.
- Don't boat alone—boating alone is not recommended. Recreational paddlers canoeists and kayakers often travel with a single craft and one partner, or even solo, but it is recommended you canoe, kayak or boat with at least three people or two craft.
- Kayakers and paddlers are highly encouraged to use the Paddle Smart Identification Sticker. In situations where a craft is found without its paddler, this sticker permits the Coast Guard to quickly identify who to contact. Get yours today from the Coast Guard Auxiliary.
- Know your limitations—be honest with yourself and your companions. Your life and the lives of those in your party may depend on how everyone understands each other's capabilities. ***(USCG)***

2 Saipan beaches red-flagged

The Division of Environment Quality has red-flagged the Unai Masalok and Unai Dangkolo beaches and is advising the public not to fish or swim within 300 feet of these locations for the next 48 hours or until otherwise notified.

DEQ said that samples collected from these locations had excessive concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria (enterococci) that exceeded the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards. These bacteria can indicate the presence of human and animal waste in the water. Water samples were taken from 10 locations on Saipan this week. For more information, contact DEQ at 664-8500. ***(DEQ)***

9th Circuit rules that US govt petition on settlement authority warrants responses

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit has determined that the U.S. government's petition that challenged the district court's ruling on settlement authority in connection with John K. Baldwin's $5.6 million federal tax refund lawsuit raises issues that warrant a response.

Ninth Circuit judges ruled Tuesday that the U.S. government's petition for writ of mandamus presents issues that need a response from the parties in the lawsuit.

The U.S. government filed the emergency petition asking the Ninth Circuit to order the district court to vacate its orders.

Senior District Judge Alex Munson's orders denied the U.S. government's motions to excuse the government from the requirement that person with full settlement authority attend the settlement conference in Baldwin's lawsuit.

The Ninth Circuit order gave Baldwin 14 days to file a response to the U.S. government's petition. The Ninth Circuit also gave the district court 14 days to file a response if it wishes to do so.

The U.S. government may file a reply within five days after service of the response(s), the Ninth Circuit judges said.

"All pending motions are held in abeyance pending further order of the court," the Ninth Circuit judges said.

Last Friday, Munson issued an order resetting the settlement conference in Baldwin's lawsuit to Feb. 29, 2012, in Coeur d' Alene, Idaho, at the Northern Division of the U.S. District Court of Idaho. He ordered the parties in the lawsuit to have representatives with full settlement authority attend the conference.

The U.S. government is objecting that the district court is requiring it to send a fairly high ranking official to attend a "routine settlement conference." Munson pointed out, though, that there is nothing routine about settlements involving millions of dollars.

The settlement conference in Baldwin's lawsuit was originally set for Oct. 17, 2011, in Idaho before Munson. The U.S. government twice moved the district court to reconsider its ruling. The federal court denied both motions. This prompted the U.S. government to bring the settlement authority issue to the Ninth Circuit. The appeal prompted Munson on Oct. 7, 2011 to cancel the scheduled Oct. 17 settlement conference.

GIFT FROM HAWAII NMC

Northern Marianas College dean of Student Services Leo Pangelinan, left, former representative Rosemond Santos, second from left, and NMC students pose for a group photo after receiving a container full of donated classroom furniture, equipment, and materials from the University of Hawaii. The donation was made possible by Hawaii Sen. Glenn Wakai and the ReachOut Pacific Organization. The college also thanked Santos, the Matson Navigation Co., Saipan Shipping, Global Logistics, and Saipan Stevedore for making the donation possible.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
COMMONWEALTH ELECTION COMMISSION

Northern Marianas Descent Registry (NMDR)
Public Notice/Announcement

This is to inform the general public that the Commonwealth Election Commision has established the Northern Marianas Descent Registry (NMDR) as mandated by Public Law 17-40. As such, the Commonwealth Election Commision has started the registration of persons of Northern Marianas Descent pursuant to Article XII Section 4 of the Constitution of the Northern Mariana Islands. Qualified individual who wish to register may do so at the Commonwealth Election Commission Office in Susupe for Saipan residents and with an Election Commissioner for Rota and Tinian residents on each respective island. Individuals who wish to register are kindly requested to provide a copy of their Certificate of Live Birth. For more information, you may contact the Commonwealth Election Commission at 664-VOTE (8683) or visit our website at http://votecnmi.gov.mp for more details.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM – OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel.: (670) 664-2375 • Fax: (670) 664-2408

ADDENDUM NO. 1
1/11/12
RFP12-GOV-036
A&E Design of the Rota Sanitary Landfill - Phase I

The previously advertised notice, Request for Proposal ("RFP") for the *"A&E Design of the Rota Sanitary Landfill-Phase I"* has been amended. The specific amendment is to include a pre-proposal conference. Amendment shall read:

A pre-proposal conference is schedule for this RFP on Monday, January 23, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. in the CIP Office conference room, Capitol Hill. This meeting is not mandatory for bid submission.

All other elements of the RFP remain as originally provided. For further information on this project, please contact the CIP Office at (670) 664-2375 or by fax (670) 664-2408, during working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. – Monday through Thursday, except holidays).

Search for missing mariner suspended

HONOLULU—The Coast Guard has suspended the search for an 18-year-old mariner who fell overboard approximately 115 miles south of American Samoa.

The Coast Guard's search area covered 2,890 square miles.

"The decision to suspend was not made easily," said Lt. Cmdr. Michael Jackson, search and rescue mission control for Joint Rescue Coordination Center Honolulu. "We took into account the amount of time this individual was in the water, probability of survival, weather data, and ultimately made the decision to suspend. We offer our thoughts and prayers to the family and friends of this man during this difficult time." ***(USCG)***

DOT awards Guam $216K in highway safety grants

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Guam Delegate Madeleine Z. Bordallo announced yesterday that the U.S. Department of Transportation has awarded $216,147.50 in federal grant assistance to the Government of Guam. The grant was awarded through the State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program, which is intended to help states and local communities develop and implement highway safety programs designed to reduce traffic accidents, deaths, injuries and property damage. This program is administered by the National Highway Safety Administration and will directly benefit the Guam Department of Public Works' Office of Highway Safety.

"The formula grant will help address our island's highway safety problems," Bordallo said. "This grant highlights the federal government's continued investment in infrastructure improvements on Guam, and the funds will help the Department of Public Works in carrying out its mission. I look forward to its implementation increasing the safety of Guam's roadways." ***(PR)***

Call for artwork for 2nd TAGS art sale

The Turtle Advocate and Guardian Society, or TAGS, a local group concerned about the alarming decline in the sea turtle population, will be hosting its second annual exhibit and sale of photography and art in March.

According to TAGS vice president Mark Robertson, "This is one of our more important fundraisers. Last year, several local people saw this as a great chance to support local artists while also doing something positive for the environment. We had pieces in all price ranges, from those that made great gifts to those quite appropriate for adding to a serious collector's compilation."

Each photographer/artist is asked to donate 25 percent of the price of any items sold.

"Last year some artists voluntarily exceeded that, with donations as high as 50 percent of the purchase price," Robertson said.

All pieces must be ready for hanging and for sale (TAGS will not frame or prepare any pieces). Interested artists may call Robertson at 235-5992, or email him at didgeridolphin@yahoo.com. More details will be made public as the time approaches. ***(TAGS)***

NMC spring 2012 registration ongoing this week

Registration for the Northern Marianas College's spring 2012 semester will be ongoing this week until Friday, Jan. 13, 2012. Students can register on the day designated for their PowerCampus ID number during this week. Late registration is from Jan. 17 to 20, 2012.

The college offers several degree and certificate programs, including a bachelor of science degree in education (emphasis on elementary education, early childhood education, special education, or rehabilitation and human services), associate degrees in business, business administration (emphasis on accounting, business management, or computer applications), liberal arts, nursing, natural resources management, criminal justice, and hospitality management. Moreover, it offers short-term certificate programs in different vocational, academic, and professional areas.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Jan. 12: Regular registration for students with *PowerCampus ID #000014011-000015820*
- Jan. 12: Student orientation for new and returning students
  -Session 1: 9am-12pm at the NMC Library (Building O)
  -Session 2: 4pm-7pm at the NMC Library (Building O)
- Jan. 13: Regular registration for students with *PowerCampus ID #000015821 and higher / New students*
- Jan. 16: Holiday, Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Jan. 17: First day of spring classes
- Jan. 17-20: Late registration week

ENGLISH PLACEMENT TEST SCHEDULE

Jan. 12: 9am - 4pm, English Lab (Building M)
Jan. 13: 9am - 2pm, English Lab (Building M)

MATH PLACEMENT TEST SCHEDULE

Jan. 12: 10am - 12pm, Room A-9
5pm - 7pm, Room A-9

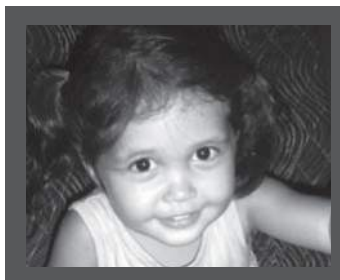
New students are required to take the English and Math placement tests before they register. After taking the placement tests, students can obtain the required slip from the English department and meet with their academic advisers. NMC academic advisers will help new students fill in registration forms and create class schedules. Students can then finish the registration process in NMC's Room D-1.

Application for admissions will still be accepted until the last day of late registration on Friday, Jan. 20, 2012, provided that both placement tests have been taken. Students may register between 9am and 6pm Monday through Friday during registration week, and between 8am and 5pm during the week of late registration.

Ongoing students must clear any outstanding balances at the Finance Office, the NMC Library and/or Office of Admissions and Records before they can register for classes. To find out if any balances exist, students can visit the Office of Admissions and Records in Building N or call 234-5498 ext. 1528/1537.

For additional information about the placement tests and registration for the Spring 2012 semester, visit the Office of Admissions and Records in Building N or call 234-5498 ext. 1528/1537, or log on to www.nmcnet.edu. ***(NMC)***

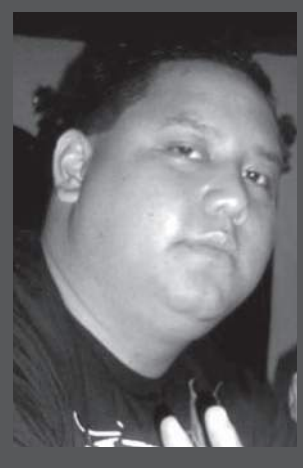
BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS



To the most amazing daughter in the world, happy 3rd birthday Ernicia Elizabeth! May you have many more birthdays to come! We love you! Greetings come from Mommy Bel, Uncle Ben, and the Agulto family.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Birthday greetings go out to Elizabeth Tomokane, who is celebrating her special day today. Enjoy your special day and many more to come! Greetings come from the family.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy birthday to Jeremiah Diaz! On your birthday, may every glowing candle on your cake be a wish that comes true. Good health and God bless! Greetings come from your family.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Happy birthday to Stanley Zacrie Lizama Santos Jr.! May God bless you with many more birthdays to come. Enjoy your special day! We love you! Greetings come from Mom, Dad, your sisters, and brothers.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy, happy birthday to Jun Alepuyo! May God bless you with many more birthdays to come! We wish you nothing but the best on your special day! With lots of love always, Noni, friends, and family.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Jan. 12, 1999

MVA, DOLI give China tourism plan a boost

The Marianas Visitors Authority and the Department of Labor and Immigration have agreed yesterday to finalize the guidelines this week in connection with the plan to entice tourists from China to visit the CNMI. When the guidelines are established, MVA will seek the approval of Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio to eventually allow the tourism officials to visit China, said Dave M. Sablan, board chair of MVA. "We outlined the steps that we have to take and the things that need to be clarified before we get the governor's approval to go to China," he said. The main objective of the trip is to convince officials from the People's Republic of China to include the Northern Marianas on the list of authorized destinations of Chinese nationals.

Dynasty drafts plan for tax payments

Executives of the beleaguered Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino yesterday assured the government that it would settle its unpaid taxes under a proposed payment plan, as they inched closer to sealing a deal with a financial backer to bail out the resort complex. Chairman Michael Kwan, along with a hotel official, met with the governor and his financial advisers, to finalize the proposal to meet its cash obligation to the Northern Marianas. However, Dynasty executives and local officials refused to give details of the payment plan. According to the governor, the plan has been under discussion since last week. "They will try to pay those outstanding taxes," he said.

Jan. 12, 2000

NMHC inks housing loan pact with Bank of Guam

The Commonwealth may soon see a growth in the construction sector, following a residential financing arrangement reached between the government's Northern Marianas Housing Corporation and the Bank of Guam. Under the agreement, Bank of Guam shall provide guaranteed loans to borrowers for purposes of home construction and renovation, as well as for the purchase of single family residential homes. The Guaranty Agreement and Loan Purchase Agreement were executed yesterday between NMHC Board Chair Juan S. Tenorio, Executive Director MaryLou S. Ada and Bank of Guam president Anthony Leon Guerrero.

CUC to decide on fate of 80MW power plant

A special board meeting is scheduled by the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation on Thursday to decide on the fate of the much delayed Saipan power project following the completion of an independent study on the island's power load. CUC Board Chair Rosario M. Elameto yesterday said it's all up to the policy-making body of the government corporation on which course to take—whether to re-bid the entire project or scale back the original 80-megawatt plant. She also refused to comment on the recommendation by Commonwealth Development Authority Board Chairman John S. Tenorio to split the initial plan and allow for future expansion.

Jan. 12, 2001

Bill eyes leniency on holders of US visa

A bill has proposed a major change in the local immigration law to allow any visitor with a U.S. visa to enter the CNMI without going through the process of meeting the requirements set by the Department of Labor and Immigration. The House of Representatives set into motion what it described as appropriate measure to streamline the processing of visitors and reduce administrative costs, while helping the local economy attract more tourists. Sponsored by Speaker Benigno R. Fitial, HB 12-253 now heads to the Senate for action after the lower house overwhelmingly approved the proposal at the start of its regular session yesterday.

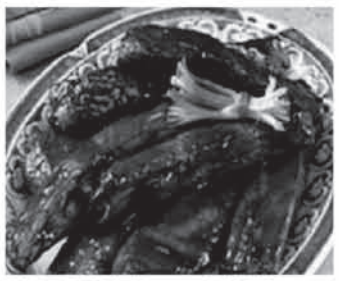
Senate gives Teno full hand to manage funds

In the wake of their disagreement with the Senate on the budget, the lower house yesterday moved to grant full power to Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio to manage cash resources of the government for the next nine months. This will supplant passing the FY 2001 budget by both houses, which has remained in deadlock following the failure to reach a compromise on how to divide the $221.66 million estimated revenues for this year. The House adopted HJR 12-17 at the start of its regular sessions yesterday that will provide full reprogramming authority to the governor to distribute the money among various departments and agencies, dashing hopes by the Senate to resume the budget talks.

JOETEN'S 3-Day New Year Sale

THURSDAY TO SATURDAY
January 12 to 14, 2012- 8:00 am. to 9:00 pm.

MEAT



Pork Spareribs 10 or 20 lbs. **$20.99**

Chicken Thigh Quarters 22lbs. **$17.99**

New Zealand Beef Shoulder Steak Family Bag 8lb. **$19.99**

Bar - S Bacon 1 lb. **$3.19**

Bar - S Jumbo Franks 1 lb. **$1.15**

Chicken Whole Fryers 30lbs. **$36.99**

SUPERMARKET

Country Goodness UHT Milk 1 ltr. (Any Flavor) **$1.59**

Seoksu Spring Water 20/350 ml. **$4.98**

Aloha Maid Juice Drinks 12 Pack **$4.99**

Hormel Spam 12oz. (Any Flavor) Limit 12 **$2.39**

Diamond G CValrose Rice 50 lbs. **$28.99**

Any Power Butane Gas 4 Pack **$3.49**

Arnotts Tim Tam Classic Dark 200 g **$2.99**

S&W PikNik Shoe String 9oz. **$2.95**

Ocean Spray Grapefruit Pink 64oz. **$4.75**

Betty Pancake Original Comp 37oz. **$2.99**

Murray S/F Pecan 5.5oz. **$3.99**

Western Family Milk Evaporated 12oz. **$1.29**

FRUITS & VEGETABLES

US. Apple Red Wash **$1.19/lb.**

U.S. Pears Bosc **$2.25/lb.**

U.S. Cabbage Chinese/Napa **79¢/lb.**

U.S. Bellpepper Red Regular **$1.75/lb.**

U.S. Tomato Large/Loose **$1.39/lb.**

US. Lettuce Cello Pice **$1.69/pc.**

Handbags **50% off**

Mens Tee Shirts and Polo Shirts **20% off**

Ladies Panties and Bras **20% off**

Hats, Belts and Neck Ties **20% off**

Girls Blouses and Shorts **20% off**

Ladies Blouses Shorts and Slacks **20% off**

Watches (All Models) **15% off**

Shoes and Sandals **15% off**

Millennium 6V Lantern **$6.99**

Aero Speed Box Fan 20" **$23.99**

Aero Speed Pedestal Fan 16' **$29.99**

12 Gal Tuff Crate Container **$12.99**

Stanley S/S Wet Dry Vac 5 Gal. **$84.99**

5 pcs Polar Cooler Set **$61.99**

Artificial Plant **$10.99**

GPX Undercabinet CD/Radio **$56.99**

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Accepts Phone Orders
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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

Kodak's digital dilemma

Every revolution has elements of tragedy as well as triumphs—even the bloodless revolutions in the way people earn a living. Economist Joseph Schumpeter called it "creative destruction," the entrepreneurial-driven process that "incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure from within, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one." Such a process was set in motion by digital technology, which released information from its physical bonds and allowed it to be stored, displayed and shared as data.

This digital transformation is now on the verge of claiming its most iconic victim: Kodak, itself one of America's great innovators and the erstwhile king of film and photographs. The real tragedy, though, is that Kodak helped invent the technology that gradually wiped out the demand for its main products, but couldn't capitalize on it. And much of the entertainment industry is facing the same dilemma.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported last week that Kodak was trying to sell patents in an effort to stave off filing for bankruptcy. It's conceivable that the company could rebound, but its fundamental problem is that it was built around the practice of

physically capturing, storing and copying images. Digital cameras and online photo albums don't just threaten Kodak's raison d'etre; they render it obsolete.

Not that the pride of Rochester, N.Y., was blindsided by these developments. Kodak invented the digital camera, creating a prototype in 1975 of a device that captured images on electronic sensors, translated the information into digital bits, stored the data on a cassette tape and transmitted the data to a TV for display. No film, no developing, no printing. Had Kodak been a gadget-making start-up, it would have raced to turn the prototype into a product. Being in the film business, however, it had little incentive to undermine its other revenue streams.

Record labels, Hollywood studios and TV producers confront the same sort of choice. They built much of their business around production and distribution methods that digital technology and the Internet have either improved upon or replaced. As long as they produce content the public wants, they're likely to find a way to muddle through. But there's another lesson in Kodak's story that's not so reassuring: Even if they encounter an innovation that could help them adapt, they may not recognize it. As Steve Sasson, the Kodak engineer credited with creating the 1975 prototype, wrote on a company blog: "We were not really thinking of this as the world's first digital camera. We were looking at it as a distant possibility."

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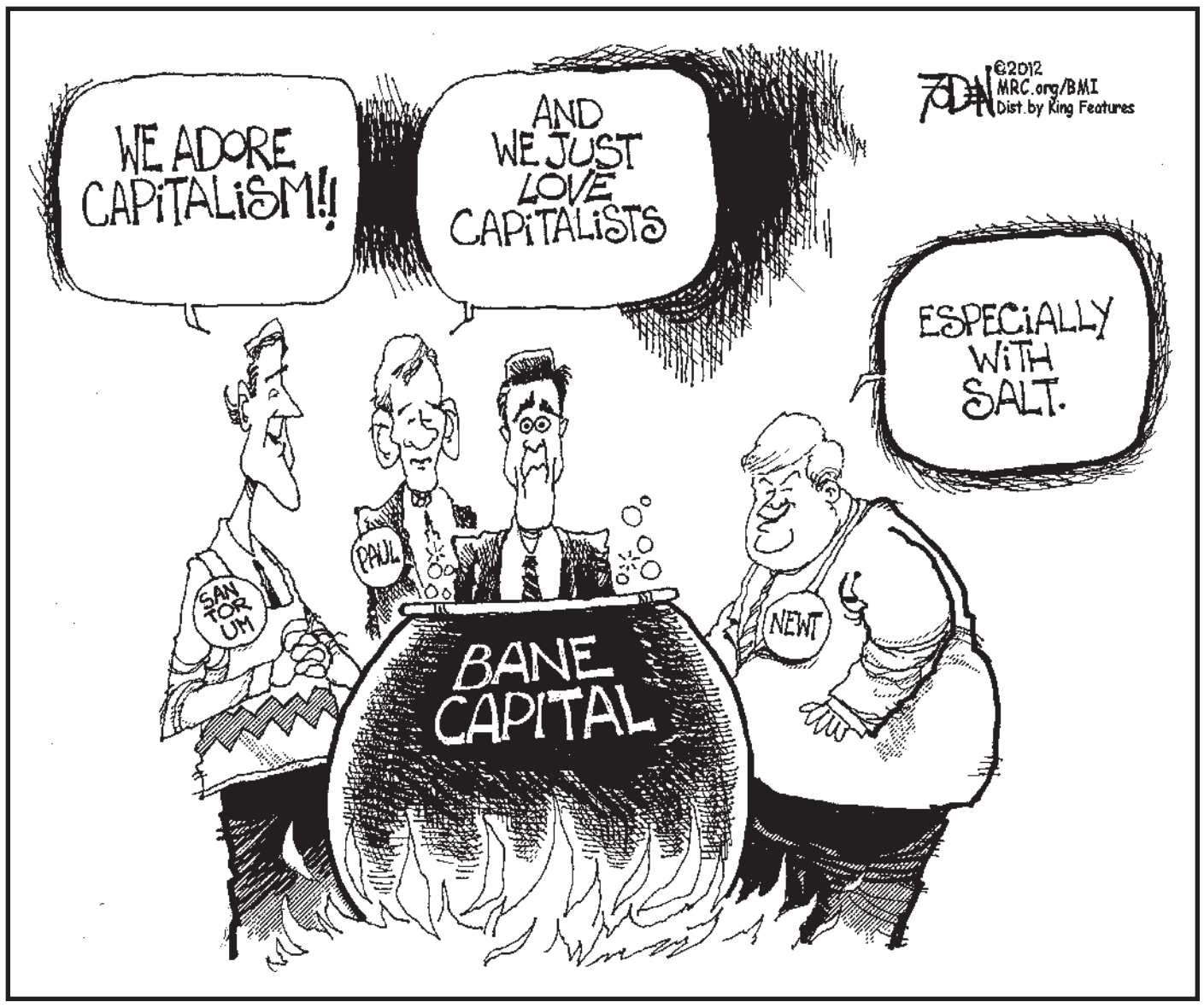


Red, red is the color of my true loves what?

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime R. Vergara (jrvergarajr2031@aol.com) previously taught at San Vicente Elementary School on Saipan and is currently a guest lecturer at Shenyang Aerospace University in China.

Seeing red is a danger sign in colloquial English, but China is festooned with red. Merchants mined December festivities to hawk their wares, and though the manger scene with halos of medieval Europe artwork was missing, mistletoes and snow, the reindeers and sleighs, and jolly Ho! Ho! Ho! St. Nick were not, specially in the ubiquitously clustered triumvirate of McDonald, Pizza Hut, and KFC who herald the new Chinese obesity. We saw red when we met three of five young students we tutor grossly off the normal scale, at a time when 80 percent of the population eke out an existence that can use the extra lard.

We are seeing red again before the Jan. 23 Lunar New Year fest. We were not here last year so we inquired if the red was for last year's Tiger (some people saw red with the NYC Amy Chua Tiger Mom's bestseller book on her extreme child-raising techniques), or next year's Dragon but we were told that even at the onset of this Year of the Rabbit, red was all over the place.

Ads in China do not have the kind of hypocritical Victorian morals that the Anglo-west has on half naked bodies and what they wear, so the selling of lingerie is an on-your-face affair in the department stores and market stalls where undies are liberally spread out. From socks to stockings, panties and briefs, headgears and bras, nightgowns and shirts, in silk, nylon, silk, and linen, they are all in red. This is not generally true of the outerwear, but red sheen is the celebrative color of the East, and highly dressed-up attires blend perfectly well with the American red rose.

China's economy is in the black, but the decline in the economic growth is already felt in credit tightening, austerity in public administration, and the retrenchment of personnel in the public and private sectors. China is a country of "façades," so building and construction are neatly drawn in huge billboards; half-finished high rise apartments dot the skyline. One constructs "face" first before finessing logistical reality. The countryside abounds in glorious visual intents and purposes, but is finding out that old-fashioned corrupt practices derail implementation. Two highly positioned executives went to jail over the failure of the newly initiated rapid rail system outside of Shanghai because of irregularities in materials' procurement and construction procedures.

The bottom line of much of the financial ledgers of the economies of the West, including Japan, is awash in red. Miracle economies like South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, are feeling the pinch. For the uninitiated, just Google "phantom wealth" and one will find books explaining this anomaly exercised by financial institutions. Corrupt practices are more institutionalized. Briefly, by supply and demand measures, each country's productivity and market activity is given a numerical value, and from there, a country is allowed to print money as exchange mechanism; surplus value on one sector is utilized in another.

The problem arises when the act of currency holding itself, and its exchange, becomes a money-making venture (making money out of money); add derivative value, and reality gets saddled with illusory balloons that in time, burst. The global stock markets fuel this speculative activity and the worst practitioners of the secretive acts of value manipulation are those engaged in weapons product, unaccounted for in the name of national security. The business of anti-terrorism is terrifying.

Equally accountable is our unexamined right to personal credit, which counts non-existent assets on the basis of future earnings, or possible earnings arrived at from corporate self-serving mathematical formulas. Our consumer society tickles our fancy and we program it that way. The U. S. and EuroZone finances that live off the industry of emerging economies overextended their assets and the balloons have burst on its expected revenues. War as an instrument of stimulating a national economy, widely practiced by former colonizers, is coming to an end, revealing the strategy to be nothing but expensive hot air.

China is moving toward utilizing its domestic strength, on internal consumption, and the financial value of its ancient art traditions. The last CCP presidium is promoting art and culture, including innovative traits in aerospace, information technology, and transport industries. A new staging of the '60s operetta *The East is Red* counts among the offerings in the national stage. India is moving in the same direction, if only it can shake off its expensive and unnecessary internecine quarrels with its separated kin.

Given the combined population of both political entities, we would not want either economy to see red. On the other hand, American politics has yet to shake off its McCarthy-esque red herring bait mania, even if its federal budget is a trillion on the red, but we will let Joe Blow of this year's high profile homophobia to worry about that. We will stick to the red lingerie!

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The Saipan Tribune reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Metamorphosis

By RIK VILLEGAS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Rik coaches business owners to develop consistently profitable businesses that can operate without them. He can be contacted at RikVillegas@gmail.com, and you can comment on this article at http://rikv.blogspot.com.

When the first phase of life as a caterpillar is complete, it moves to a branch and begins to spin a cocoon to transition into a butterfly. This metamorphosis is different from a tadpole that transitions into a frog because the caterpillar undergoes a complete meltdown into a mass of liquid gel. Specific cells, called imago cells, will organize themselves into an entirely new creature that will eventually emerge from its protective shell.

To do this, the butterfly must create an opening large enough that will allow it to escape. Interestingly, the longer the struggle during this transition, the longer the butterfly will live. Well-intentioned individuals who try to "help" the emerging butterfly break through the cocoon often cause more harm than good because the new creature needs to exert enough effort to pump fluids into the small, unformed wings. If this doesn't occur, the wings are not developed enough for it to fly away to safety and find food, and it will eventually die.

As humans, we go through numerous transitions in life that can motivate us to change as we experience life's struggles. A successful "metamorphosis" occurs when we are able to learn the lessons that life presents to us. If we avoid or ignore the struggles, we may not learn the important lessons that will allow us to progress toward a more fulfilled person.

This progress may involve deep introspection that causes us to examine our current beliefs and realities, and ask ourselves if we are happy with the way things are right now. Interestingly, the less we have to struggle, the less we will learn from the lesson, and the more likely we will have to deal with similar struggles in the future. Often our greatest growth will come from experiences that cause a "meltdown." At this point we might become unrecognizable to ourselves and others as we examine how we have arrived at a particular point in life, determine what we want to become in the future, and then make the decision to reshape ourselves into a new and better person.

Knowing our values and beliefs allows us to lay a foundation upon which we can form a specific image of the person we wish to become. If our struggle is shortened by well-intentioned groups, persons, or programs, then we may not fully learn life's lesson, nor transform into the person we are destined to become, and instead of evolving into a better person we devolve into a bitter person.

It may be instinctive to reach out to others and take the pain away from those who are struggling. However, unless the situation is life-threatening or could cause long-term harm, our efforts to help might shortchange the growth process and deny the person the challenge that is necessary for them to transform in a more mature and joyous person.

Social programs are great to help struggling individuals to get back on their feet; however, they can backfire by creating a culture of dependency on others that turns those helped into helpless individuals. It denies them the challenges they need to become more self-reliant and fulfilled. This nature is then passed on to the next generations, where the assistance becomes an entitlement that limits them from developing into fully capable individuals who contribute back to society.

To break this dependency cycle, one must realize that the struggle is part of the growth process. It will take three key characteristics to emerge from the cocoon of safety: 1) commitment to our future self, 2) persistence to not quit when the going gets tough, and 3) developing new life skills and strategies that will allow us to remain independent.

If we have a specific image of the person we want to become in our mind, stay focused and committed to a course of action that will allow us to fully develop, and then implement the new skills and strategies necessary to make a successful transition into a new and better person, then we can continue this process when we have new challenges we must face.

Do you have what it takes to meet life's challenges head on and gain the strength to be a new and better person, or will you remain in a cocoon of safety? Leadership and life are about growing through each of our challenges and experiencing transformations that eventually allow us to fly above them and create a new life that is more fulfilling and an inspiration to others. The question isn't if you'll experience a life transition, but instead the quality of your experience as you transition through life.

Letters to the Editor

Expunge critics who don't read carefully

In reference to a recent letter written by Herminia Matsumoto Fusco, which was mass-delivered to the Governor's Office, the Senate, and the House of Representatives, I feel compelled to respond to this letter due to the author's lack of simple research and reading and, subsequently, the author's overreaction to non-existent threats to her special existence.

Ms. Fusco has the right to freely comment on legislation drafted by elected members of the CNMI Legislature, but readers of her ranting diatribe on House Bill 17-52, titled, "The Restoration of Rights and Expungement Act of 2011," have the right to have her ill-informed and derogatory comments expunged from their minds.

The truth about the intent and contents of the bill is simple enough. Every state in the United States of America has some sort of expungement law, and the Commonwealth should also offer to those who qualify a chance to modify their past mistake into a positive step for their future goals and desires. Furthermore, the restoration of rights or expungement is not an automatic "gift" for past offenders of the law. The process to restore one's rights or expunge one's records is a lengthy process that must be approved by the courts. The Attorney General's Office can also object, along with the Victims' Rights Office and the public at large.

As the bill stands for final legislative review, felony convictions *will not be removed from the records*. A felon, after waiting five years, can petition the Commonwealth Superior Court only for a "restoration of rights," and not for an expungement or erasure of his or her records. The restored rights include voting, government employment, holding office, serve on a jury, and be a notary public. It doesn't include the right to possess or carry any firearm. Moreover, the bill does *not* extend the right of expungement or a restoration of rights to: 1) any person registered as a sex offender per Public Law 11-35; 2) any person convicted of any heinous crime such as murder, rape, aggravated sexual assault, or any other conviction deemed by the CNMI Superior Court and the Office of the Attorney General as justification to forfeit a person's right for expungement or a restoration of rights; and 3) any person who has more than one conviction for a violent crime or offense that is punishable by five years or more.

In lesser offenses, any person guilty of a misdemeanor can petition the court after waiting three years, and misdemeanors can be expunged under the right circumstances and only by a judge following a thorough review.

So, what is Ms. Fusco's problem with allowing certain convicted people the right to petition the court for the possible restoration of their rights or the expungement of misdemeanors? Furthermore, one must understand that these people will be re-examined and challenged all over again and will be exposed and judged again in public view. And if a convicted felon is fortunate to have his or her rights restored, and then runs for elected office and wins by a majority of his or her law-abiding supporters, is there a problem with the law, or a problem with people who have self–righteous and narrow-minded views on everyone's rights except themselves, like Herminia Fusco?

Rep. Stanley T. McGinnis Torres
Capital Hill, Saipan

Wild swings versus 'natural' rights

If Keith Brooks did his homework, he would have learned and come to terms with the founding fathers' thorough defense of the fundamental rights of citizens under the First Principles upon which was penned, "We the people" of our rights to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Had he critically probed the issue with his scholarly pen, he also would have learned that there's nowhere under the U.S. Constitution authorizing the U.S. Congress to amend fundamental provisions of the law of the land by its approval of Section 805 of the Covenant Agreement or land alienation. Isn't it true that fundamental provisions of the U.S. Constitution are enduring, therefore non-negotiable? Isn't there a set of laws governing amendments to the U.S. Constitution? It requires ratification by 39 states, true?

Had he probed further, Mr. Brooks would have discovered that the U.S. Constitution didn't grant the U.S. judicial system the authority to blindly violate the equal protection clause by conveniently embracing the flag. The Ninth Circuit failed to realize that its anomalous assertion to fulfilling U.S. international obligations under a UN document on indigenous rights that our country is a signatory too. It affixed its signature because it included a provision ruling out discrimination on landownership in U.S. soil.

I am also a local, sir, and I definitely disagree with your lame and bigoted view. No sir! Advancing purposeful ignorance isn't the vehicle to fostering synergistic working relationships among citizens all across the country. Shall we uphold "We the People" so we all read and work out of the same page in "I Pluribus Unum?" "In many, one."

John S. DelRosario Jr.
As Gonno, Saipan

No headaches here

In response to the kind words of Mr. Beebe and Mr. Hirshbein recently in the *Saipan Tribune*, thank you and while I don't usually get into public squabbles about legal issues, I had to interject here. In the last few days I have been thanked publically by numerous locals who said that I have stated how they feel and are too shy to state it. After World War II, the CNMI was placed into a Trust Territory as was numerous other islands in the Pacific mandated by the United Nations. The United States became the trustee of these territories. In 1975, the CNMI came into a Covenant or political alliance with the United States in which the United States is obligated to help the island chain with national defense and foreign affairs. When the Covenant was signed it had 10 articles that the two parties agreed to. The eight amendments dealt with land issues. It clearly states in Section 805: "the government of the Northern Mariana Islands, in view of the importance of the ownership of land for the culture and traditions of the people of the Northern Mariana Islands, and in order to protect them against exploitation and to promote their economic advancement and self-sufficiency: (a) will until 25 years after the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement, and may thereafter, regulate the alienation of permanent and long-term interests in real property so as to restrict the acquisition of such interests to persons of Northern Mariana Islands descent; and (b) may regulate the extent to which a person may own or hold land which is now public land."

In other words, the Covenant of the CNMI with the United States government allows the CNMI government to regulate land to be bought and sold to whomever it deems should be able to possess the land and not the United States. In other words, the Covenant would supersede the U.S. Constitution on this matter. The U.S. government only leases land on the island and doesn't own it. While technically part of the USA, the CNMI is in a political alliance with the United States and the Covenant can be broken by the CNMI government at any time, unlike the 50 states that belong to the USA. The U.S. Constitution, according to the Covenant, doesn't always apply here. That is why the lawsuit has been filed to vote only.

If the voters or the Legislature change article 12, I have respect for it. Yes, we are guests no matter how long you have lived or worked here. Like the popular saying back home: Just because a cat has kittens in an oven you don't call them biscuits. Due to the Covenant, certain laws can only be settled and filed within the CNMI and not within the U.S. courts. It doesn't seem I have the headache here.

Keith Brooks
Bhutan

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Partly sunny with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°

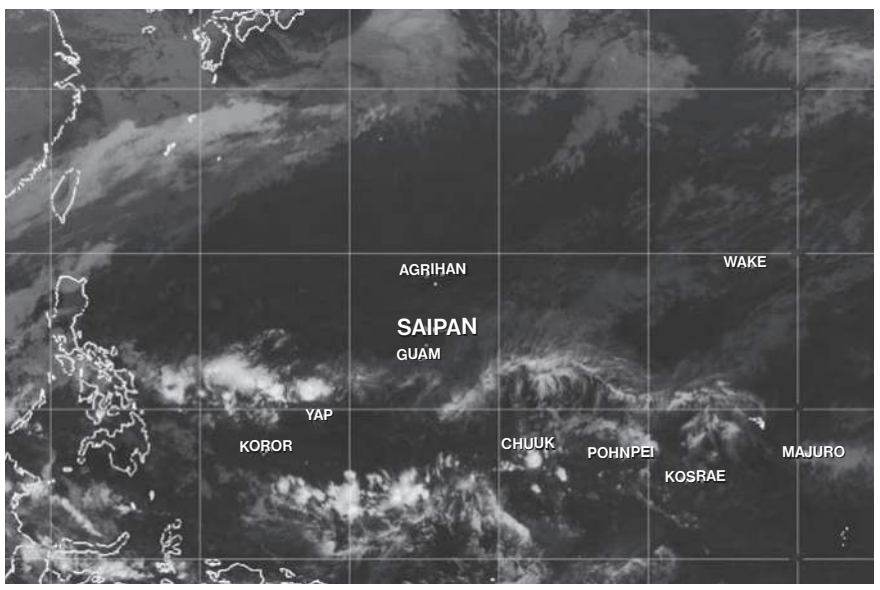
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	▲83	▼76
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼78
Yap	Showers	▲85	▼78
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼80
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	▲85	▼79
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	▲85	▼79
Majuro	Showers	▲85	▼78

Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲71	▼66
Beijing	Sunny	▲40	▼15
Hong Kong	Showers	▲62	▼60
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	▲79	▼67
London	Partly Cloudy	▲53	▼37
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲69	▼43
Manila	Thundershowers	▲83	▼74
Melbourne	Showers	▲71	▼57
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲82	▼59
New York	Rain	▲46	▼38
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	▲48	▼38
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	▲45	▼39
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲44	▼30
Rome	Sunny	▲60	▼39
Salem	Partly Cloudy	▲45	▼31
San Francisco	Sunny	▲65	▼43
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲36	▼21
Tokyo	Sunny	▲50	▼33
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	▲56	▼39

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2012
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from 21N180 to 21N176E then continues as a shear line to Wake Island and south of Guam at 11N145E to beyond 130E at 10N. Cloudiness and scattered showers are found along and up to 250 miles north of this boundary. Trade-wind convergence is generating a long band of scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms from south of Koror and Yap to Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae or within 125 miles of a line from 4N135E to 4N142E to 8N155E to 4N164E. A trade-wind disturbance is creating scattered showers over Majuro within 120 miles of a line from 6N171E to 5N178E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

3:32 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.3 Feet
10:20 AM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
4:12 PM	Today	Low Tide:	1.0 Feet
9:11 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:46 AM	6:04 PM
Friday	6:46 AM	6:04 PM
Saturday	6:46 AM	6:05 PM
Sunday	6:47 AM	6:06 PM
Monday	6:47 AM	6:06 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	8:49 PM	8:40 AM
Friday	9:44 PM	9:24 AM
Saturday	10:39 PM	10:06 AM
Sunday	11:36 PM	10:50 AM
Monday		11:35 AM

Note: Blank spaces indicate that a rising or a setting did not occur during that 24-hour interval.

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

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- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 11, 2012

DEPARTURES

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)			
C05062	2:10am	2:40am	1, 5
SAIPAN (SPN)-ROTA (ROP)			
C05064	4:15am	4:50am	1, 5
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)			
C05064	4:15am	5:45am	1, 5 via ROP
C05070	4:35am	5:25am	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
C05068	8:25am	9:15am	Daily
C05074	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C05076	3:10pm	4:00pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05078	6:50pm	7:40pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05078	7:00pm	7:50pm	3, 6
C05072	9:55pm	10:45pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05072	10:05pm	10:55pm	3, 6
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)			
DL287	6:00am	8:40am	Daily
DL285	6:35am	9:15am	1, 3, 5, 7
DL297	4:25pm	7:15pm	Daily
SAIPAN-OSAKA (KIX)			
OZ119	4:00am	6:40am	Daily
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)			
OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ119	4:00am	11:20am	Daily via KIX
OZ604	3:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)			
OZ608	3:35am	7:05am	4, 7
DL581	4:10am	7:30am	1, 5
SAIPAN-GUANZHOU (CAN)			
3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)			
3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)			
OZ606/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
C05070/191	4:35am	9:45am	3, 6 via GUM
DL287/173	6:00am	10:25pm	Daily via NRT
C05068/183	8:25am	9:25pm	2, 5 via GUM
C05068/183	8:25am	9:40pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
C05076/183	3:10pm	9:25pm	2, 5 via GUM
C05076/183	3:10pm	9:40pm	1, 4, 7 via GUM
C05076/193	3:10pm	11:00pm	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:00pm	Daily via ICN
C05072/PR111	9:55pm	7:50am+1	1, 5, 7 via GUM
C05072/PR111	10:05pm	7:50am+1	3, 6 via GUM
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)			
OZ606/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ606/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
C05076/147	3:10pm	10:25pm	1, 5 via GUM
OZ604/723	3:20pm	10:30pm	Daily via ICN
OZ604/749	3:20pm	10:50pm	Daily via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)			
C05064	5:15am	5:45am	1, 5
ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN (SPN)			
C05062	3:10am	3:45am	1, 5
GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
C05062	2:10am	3:45am	1, 5 via ROP
C05069	2:45am	3:35am	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
C05071	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
C05073	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05075	1:40pm	2:30pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C05077	5:30pm	6:20pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05077	5:40pm	6:30pm	3, 6
C05079	8:35pm	9:25pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05079	8:45pm	9:35pm	3, 6
NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL288	8:40pm	1:15am+1	Daily
DL286	7:40pm	12:20am+1	2, 4, 6, 7
OSAKA (KIX)-SAIPAN			
OZ120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	Daily
SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	Daily via KIX
OZ605	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
OZ607	9:00pm	2:20am+1	3, 6
DL580	10:10pm	2:55am+1	4, 7
GUANZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN			
3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5
SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
DL172/288	8:00am	1:15am+1	Daily via NRT
C0190/5077	10:55am	6:30pm	3, 6 via GUM
C0190/5079	10:55am	9:35pm	3, 6 via GUM
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/C05071	10:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
C0192/5071	10:25pm	7:50am+1	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
C0184/5071	11:10pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
OZ704/603	11:40pm	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
C0184/5071	11:59pm	7:50am+1	2, 5 via GUM
HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
OZ724/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ750/603	1:00am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
C0180/5071	11:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 5 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 5K: FlyGuam; 3U: Sichuan Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CO: Continental; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana

ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam–Rota			
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily
Rota–Saipan			
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily
Guam–Rota			
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily
Rota–Saipan	17:50	18:20	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily
Rota–Guam	10:20	10:45	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily
Rota–Guam			
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily
Saipan–Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Tinian–Saipan			
FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily

Business

Google search gets more personal, raises hackles

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Google is sifting through the photos and commentary on its blossoming social network so its Internet search results can include more personal information.

The additional personal touches that began to roll out Tuesday mark another step toward one of Google's most ambitious goals. The Internet search leader eventually hopes to know enough about each of its users so it can tailor its results to fit the unique interests of each person looking for something.

Different people should start seeing different search results more frequently now that Google Inc. is importing content from its 6-month-old Plus service, a product that the company introduced in an attempt to counter the popularity of Facebook's online hangout and Twitter's short-messaging hub. Google's main search results page also will start highlighting more content from an older online photo service called Picasa. Other features will recommend additional people and companies to follow on Plus, based on their search requests. Those suggestions will exclude publicly accessible information about accounts on Facebook and Twitter.

The preferential treatment for Plus might amplify concerns about the objectivity of Google's search results -a focal point of broad regulatory investigations in the U.S. and Europe.

The Federal Trade Commission, attorneys general in six states, and the European Commission are looking into complaints alleging Google has been unfairly exploiting its dominance in Internet search to promote its other services while ignoring or downplaying pertinent information about its rivals.

The exclusive Plus recommendations in Google's search results are "exactly the kind of thing that the antitrust people are screaming about," said Danny Sullivan, an industry expert who has been following Google since the 1990s and is now editor of SearchEngineLand.com. "This is very un-Google like. It's unfair to other services and it's unfair to people."

Sullivan's criticism is especially striking because he has generally defended other search features that highlight Google's own services.

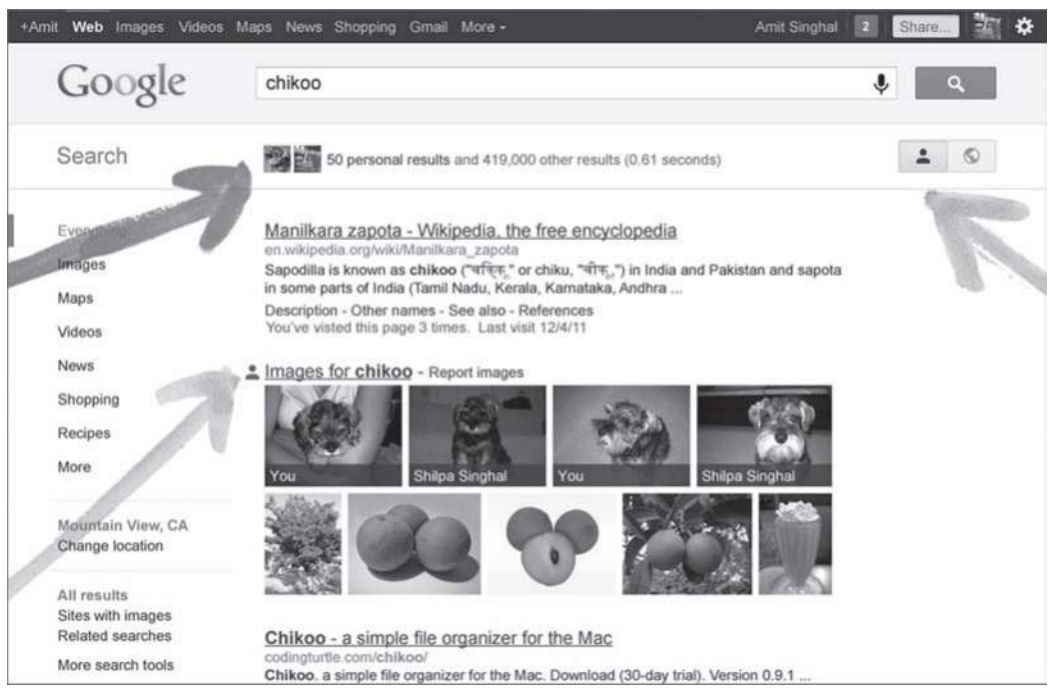
Twitter said it's worried the added emphasis on Plus in Google's search results will make it more difficult to find breaking news and other compelling information shared within the 250 million messages, or tweets, posted on its service each day.

"We think that's bad for people, publishers, news organizations and Twitter users," Twitter said in a statement.

Facebook didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Google says its efforts to reel in more information from other sharing services are frequently thwarted by the providers. For instance, Twitter puts explicit instructions in its computer computing telling Google not to index the material, according to Google.

"Ushering in the new era of social and private data search will take close cooperation, and we hope other sites participate so we can provide the best possible experience for our users," Google said in a statement issued after it was asked about its added emphasis on Plus in its search results.


+Amit Web Images Videos Maps News Shopping Gmail More
Amit Singhal 2 Share...
Google
chikoo
Search
50 personal results and 419,000 other results (0.61 seconds)
Images
Maps
Videos
News
Shopping
Recipes
More
Mountain View, CA
Change location
All results
Sites with images
Related searches
More search tools
Manilkara zapota - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manilkara_zapota
Sapodilla is known as chikoo ("चिकू," or chiku, "चीकू,") in India and Pakistan and sapota in some parts of India (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra ...
Description - Other names - See also - References
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codingturtle.com/chikoo/
Chikoo. a simple file organizer for the Mac. Download (30-day trial). Version 0.9.1 ...

AP

This screen shot provided by Google, shows the Personal Results page. Google is sifting through the photos and commentary on its blossoming social network so its Internet search results can include more personal information.

Internet address expansion set despite ".worries."

NEW YORK (AP)—Bidding will begin this week for words and brand names such as ".sport," ".NYC" and ".bank" to join ".com" as online monikers.

Up to 1,000 domain name suffixes—the ".com" in an Internet address—could be added each year in the most sweeping change to the domain name system since its creation in the 1980s.

To some, the system will lead to ".cash." To others, it will mean ".confusion."

The idea is to let Las Vegas hotels, casinos and other attractions congregate around ".Vegas," or a company such as Canon Inc. to draw customers to "cameras.Canon" or "printers.Canon." The new system will also make Chinese, Japanese and Swahili versions of ".com" possible.

Some companies and entrepreneurs have already expressed interest in applying for a suffix and possibly earning millions of dollars a year from people and groups wanting a website that ends in that name.

Others are skeptical, though. They worry that an expansion will mean more addresses available to scams that use similar-sounding names such as "Amazom" rather than "Amazon" to trick people into giving passwords and credit card information. Others worry that new suffixes could create additional platforms for hate groups or lead to addresses ending in obscenities.

AP

Rod Beckstrom, CEO of ICANN, speaks during an interview, Monday, Jan. 9, 2012 in New York.

The oversight agency for Internet addresses, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, spent years crafting guidelines meant to curtail nefarious activities. Still, critics say ICANN is rushing to expand the naming system without putting enough safeguards in place.

"You don't want a ship to have holes... and ask everybody to come on board," said Dan Jaffe, the chief lobbyist at the Association of National Advertisers, which represents 400 companies and 10,000 brand names. "You should close the holes, then run a pilot project to see if the systems you put in place are actually effective."

There's also a question of how useful the new names will be, at least among English speakers. Alternatives to ".com" introduced over the past decade have had mixed success. These days, Internet users are more likely to type "new Muppet movie" into their browser's search box than to know the official site is at "Disney.go.com/muppets."

ICANN will start taking bids for new suffixes on Thursday at 12:01 a.m. Greenwich Mean Time (Wednesday at 7:01 p.m. EST).

That doesn't mean people will be able to type in "Caribbean.vacation" or "iPad.Apple" right away. Initial bidding will stay open until April. After that, ICANN will accept challenges for trademark conflicts and other reasons. Auctions would be held should multiple bidders seek the same suffix. It could take months more for winning bidders to set up.

Ford unveils new sedan in effort to revive Lincoln

DETROIT (AP)—Lincoln was once the pinnacle of luxury. Continental limousines carried presidents from Franklin Roosevelt to Ronald Reagan. Town Cars ferried executives through Manhattan. Athletes and rappers cruised around in Navigator SUVs.

But over the last two decades, the Lincoln lineup grew stale as Ford transformed its other cars and trucks with new designs and features. Now it's finally Lincoln's turn for an update, one that aims to show customers the brand can make more than hearses and airport limos.

It's been a long wait. For years, Ford saw more promise in other luxury brands it was buying, like Jaguar and Volvo. Many Lincoln models became too similar to their lower-priced Ford siblings. Sales suffered.

Lincoln sold a little more than 85,000 vehicles last year, down 63 percent from the brand's peak in 1990. At one time, it was the top luxury brand in the U.S. But Lincoln is now outsold by seven other luxury brands, including Lexus and Infiniti. Presidents since Bill Clinton have ridden in Cadillacs.

Saving Lincoln has been on Ford's back burner for a long time. The automaker decided first to tackle more pressing matters like downsizing and returning to profitability. After a five-year turnaround, the company is making money again. CEO Alan Mulally has shed Ford's other luxury brands and is ready to focus on turning Lincoln into a real competitor that can attract wealthy buyers and fat profits.

Fourteen months ago, Ford assigned a team of 180 designers and engineers to focus on Lincoln full time. The company recently opened its first dedicated Lincoln design studio since the 1970s.

Buyers will see the fruit of those efforts at the Detroit auto show, where Ford on Tuesday pulled the wraps off an MKZ sedan that is close to the model that will go on sale this fall. The new MKZ is one of seven new or revamped Lincolns due out by 2015, when the Lincoln brand will celebrate its 100th birthday.

The 2013 MKZ is already getting some critical buzz.

Geithner in Beijing, faces uphill struggle on Iran

BEIJING (AP)—China and the United States have pledged during a visit by Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner to cooperate on boosting the global economic recovery, but Chinese backing for U.S. sanctions on Iran's oil industry appeared unlikely.

China buys almost one-third of Iran's oil exports and has rejected the U.S. sanctions as a tool to rein in Tehran's nuclear program. That sets Washington up for a public setback if the government of the world's second-largest economy refuses to cooperate.

Geithner was expected to make the U.S. case for sanctions in meetings Wednesday with Premier Wen Jiabao, Vice President Xi Jinping—who is in line to become China's next leader—and Vice Premier Li Keqiang, another rising star.

At the start of his meeting with Xi, Geithner said the main priority of his talks was economic growth and recovery in the United States and around the world, although he did briefly mention nuclear nonproliferation.

"On economic growth, financial stability around the world, on nonproliferation, we have what we view as a very strong cooperative relationship with the government and we are looking forward to building on that," he said before reporters were ordered out of the meeting room in the Great Hall of the People in central Beijing.

The reporters were told to leave by the Chinese side earlier than agreed, drawing a protest from U.S. Embassy spokesman Richard Buangan.

Geithner also past on greetings from President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden, saying both were looking forward to seeing Xi "in Washington relatively soon." Xi is expected to visit the U.S. sometime in the next several months.

Geithner met with his counterpart, Vice Premier Wang Qishan, on Tuesday night. According to the official Xinhua News Agency, Wang also pledged cooperation on global economic issues, and called on the United States to loosen export controls of high-tech products to China, one of China's complaints about the countries' trade relationship.

U.S. critics, meanwhile, say Chinese currency controls keep the yuan undervalued and give its exporters an unfair advantage, distorting trade at a time when Washington and other governments are under pressure to bring down unemployment.

China's trade surplus with the United States widened 24.2 percent to $17.4 billion in December, according to data released Tuesday.

Geithner also is due to visit Tokyo, another major buyer of Iranian oil, for talks after he leaves Beijing later Wednesday.

China has criticized U.S. sanctions on Iran, approved by Obama on New Year's Eve, as improper and ineffective. Beijing supported U.N. sanctions on Iran's nuclear program but says action should be multilateral.

The sanctions would target Tehran's oil industry by barring financial institutions from the U.S. market if they do business with Iran's central bank.

China's oil imports "have nothing to do with the nuclear issue," a Chinese deputy foreign minister, Cui Tiankai, said Monday.

Nation

Romney sweeps NH to cement top status; Paul second

CONCORD, N.H. (AP)—Mitt Romney cruised to a solid victory in the New Hampshire primary Tuesday night, picking up steam from his first-place finish in the lead-off Iowa caucuses and firmly establishing himself as the man to beat for the Republican presidential nomination.

"Tonight we made history," Romney told cheering supporters before pivoting to a stinging denunciation of President Barack Obama. "The middle class has been crushed ... our debt is too high and our opportunities too few," he declared—ignoring the rivals who had been assailing him for weeks and making clear he intends to be viewed as the party's nominee in waiting after only two contests.

His Republican rivals said otherwise, looking ahead to South Carolina on Jan. 21 as the place to stop the former Massachusetts governor. Already, several contenders and committees supporting them had put down heavy money to reserve time for television advertising there.

Even so, the order of finish—Ron Paul second, followed by Jon Huntsman, with Newt Gingrich and Rick Santorum trailing—scrambled the field and prolonged the increasingly desperate competition to emerge as the true conservative rival to Romney.

AP

Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney kisses his wife Ann as he arrives at the Romney for President New Hampshire primary night victory party at Southern New Hampshire University in Manchester, N.H., Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2012.

With his victory, Romney became the first Republican to sweep the first two contests in competitive races since 1976. Based on partial returns, The Associated Press estimated that turnout would exceed the 2008 record by about 4 percent.

Romney fashioned his victory despite a sustained assault by rivals eager to undermine his claim as the contender best situated to beat Obama and help reduce the nation's painfully high unemployment. Gingrich led the way, suggesting at one point that Romney, a venture capitalist, was a corporate raider. The front-runner's defenders said the rhetoric was more suitable to a Democratic opponent than a conservative Republican.

Returns from 69 percent of New Hampshire precincts showed Romney with 38 percent of the vote, followed by Texas Rep Paul with 24 percent, former Utah Gov. Huntsman with 17 percent and former House Speaker Gingrich and former Pennsylvania Sen. Santorum with 10 percent each.

In interviews as they left their polling places, New Hampshire voters said the economy was the issue that mattered most to them, and a candidate's ability to defeat Obama outranked other qualities.

Romney had won in Iowa by a scant eight votes over Santorum, and gained barely a quarter of the vote there.

On Tuesday, he battled not only his rivals but also high expectations as the ballots were counted, particularly since his pursuers had virtually conceded New Hampshire, next-door to the state Romney governed for four years.

CDC: Young adults down 9 drinks when they binge

ATLANTA (AP)—College-age drinkers average nine drinks when they get drunk, government health officials said Tuesday. That surprising statistic is part of a new report highlighting the dangers of binge drinking, which usually means four to five drinks at a time.

Overall, about 1 in 6 U.S. adults surveyed said they had binged on alcohol at least once in the previous month, though it was more than 1 in 4 for those ages 18 to 34.

And that's likely an underestimate: Alcohol sales figures suggest people are buying a lot more alcohol than they say they are consuming. Health officials estimate that about half of the beer, wine and liquor consumed in the United States by adults each year is downed during binge drinking.

"I know this sounds astounding, but I think the numbers we're reporting are really an underestimate," said Dr. Robert Brewer, who leads the alcohol program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The CDC report is based on telephone surveys last year of more than 450,000 adults. They were asked about their alcohol drinking in the past month, including the largest number of drinks they had at one time.

AP

In this Tuesday, June 29, 2004 file photo, a bartender serves two mugs of beer at a tavern in Montpelier, Vt.

Binge drinking is generally defined as four drinks for women and five for men in a period of a few hours. Binge drinkers ages 18 to 24 reported nine drinks, or one more than the national average of eight drinks.

But those numbers are likely averages for all episodes of binge drinking, Brewer said, citing other studies.

The number of drinks per binge went down with age, to less than six for those ages 65 and older.

Binge drinking may be considered socially acceptable—to many, a fun night out at the bar. And many don't see it as a sign of a serious drinking problem. Indeed, experts say fewer than 20 percent of binge drinkers would be medically diagnosed as alcoholics.

But health officials say binge drinking accounts for more than 40,000 deaths each year. It contributes to problems like violence and drunk-driving accidents and longer-term issues like cancer, heart disease and liver failure.

It is possible that a round of binge drinking could lead to acute alcohol poisoning. But how many drinks at one sitting could kill you depends on many factors, including how big you are, what you consumed and how quickly you did it.

Barricades at NYC's former Occupy camp are removed

NEW YORK (AP)—Barricades surrounding a park that served as a camp for Occupy Wall Street protesters were removed Tuesday, allowing protesters to stream back in.

The atmosphere was celebratory but calm on Tuesday evening as about 300 protesters began filling New York City's Zuccotti Park a couple of hours after the barricades were taken down and a day after a complaint about the barricades was filed with the city. Protesters milled around, eating lasagna on paper plates and playing chess.

Security guards who were previously guarding the barricades stood off to the side, along with a handful of police officers. It was a minor victory for the protesters, who have complained about financial inequality in demonstrations that gained traction across the globe.

"Word spread pretty quickly, and we ran down here," demonstrator Lauren DiGioia said. "It's hard to remember what it was like before the barricades were put up." Police spokesman Paul Browne said the NYPD and Brookfield Office Properties, the park's owner, had been talking about removing the barriers last week. The decision was made to remove them Tuesday because officials felt they were no longer necessary, Browne said.

Brookfield spokeswoman Melissa Coley confirmed in an email that the barricades were taken down but declined to comment further. A Brookfield employee who refused to give his name told an Associated Press reporter: "The barriers are down, but the other rules are the same."

Some Occupy protesters planned to stay overnight, DiGioia said, but it was unclear whether they planned to use tents or sleeping bags, which have been banned from the lower Manhattan park since an early morning police raid evicted protesters Nov. 15.

One security guard told a group of protesters: "No sleeping bags allowed, either, OK, folks?"

Zuccotti Park regulations, stipulated by Brookfield, ban everything from erecting tents or tarps to lying down on benches. Those rules were not enforced until the police raid, and were only made public after protesters began occupying the park on Sept. 17. Until then, the only visible rules posted in the park forbade skateboarding, rollerblading and bicycling.

Protester Jeff Brewer said he tried to erect a tent but it was quickly taken down by security guards.

"I was still putting in the poles when they showed up," Brewer said. "Our food is in, our library is up. I think it's going to be a big celebration for us in the park right now."

On Monday, civil rights groups filed a complaint with the city's buildings department saying the barricades were a violation of city zoning law because they restricted public access to the space. The New York Civil Liberties Union commended the removal of the barricades in a statement late Tuesday.

"We're pleased the city is finally giving the park back to the people," said NYCLU Executive Director Donna Lieberman. "We hope Zuccotti Park can now resume its rightful place as a center for meeting and protest in New York City."

"I certainly think the political pressure and public pressure and the letter from the civil rights lawyers' organizations all brought to bear on the city and Brookfield and made them consider acting a little more reasonably, at least for now," said Gideon Oliver, one of the attorneys representing the demonstrators.

Since the eviction, members of the public had only been able to enter the public through two checkpoints at the park that were guarded by police officers or security personnel.

ACROSS THE NATION

Sheriff: Food dispute led to Ohio murder-suicide

LOGAN, Ohio (AP)—A dispute over whether a terminally ill woman should have been given tea and toast or an orange apparently upset her husband so much that he shot and killed two of her sisters and his son before killing himself, a sheriff said Tuesday. The sick woman, 59-year-old Darlene Gilkey, who's dying of cancer, witnessed the shootings from a hospital bed in her living room but was uninjured, Hocking County Sheriff Lanny North said. The woman's son, Ralph Sowers III, told a 911 dispatcher he survived when his stepfather, Paul Gilkey, said he was sparing him because he had kids. Sowers said his stepfather repeatedly warned him to get out of the way before putting the gun above his head and shooting his brother, who was hiding behind him. After the shootings Monday, Paul Gilkey, 63, stepped out onto his front porch, sat down in a chair and shot himself to death, the sheriff said.

NC panel: Sterilization victims should get $50K

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP)—As many as 2,000 people forcibly sterilized decades ago in North Carolina should get $50,000 each, a task force said Tuesday, marking the first time a state has moved to compensate victims of eugenics programs that weeded out the "feeble-minded" and others deemed undesirable. The payout, which could amount to as much as $100 million, still needs approval from the Legislature. But the prospects for passage of some sort of compensation are promising, since the governor immediately embraced the recommendation, and the House speaker has come out in favor of payments. While dozens of states had programs in the 20th century that allowed people to be sterilized against their will in the name of improving the human race, none of the others has offered anything more than apologies. Compensation "sends a clear message that we in North Carolina are people who pay for our mistakes and that we do not tolerate bureaucracies that trample on basic human rights," said panel chairwoman Dr. Laura Gerald, a pediatrician.

Asia

NKorea to pardon convicts; generals back young Kim

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea said Tuesday it will issue special pardons for convicts, a rare move that appeared to be aimed at boosting the popularity of young new leader Kim Jong Un as he attempts to fill his late father's shoes.

Efforts to show Kim is firmly in control have provided a drumbeat of news reports in state media since his father, Kim Jong Il, died Dec. 17. On Tuesday, North Korea's state television showed top military officers again swearing fervent pledges of loyalty, vowing to become human "rifles and bombs" to defend Kim Jong Un, who was recently appointed supreme commander of the armed forces.

The amnesty, to be issued beginning Feb. 1, is to commemorate what would have been Kim Jong Il's 70th birthday in February and the 100th anniversary in April of the birth of his father, North Korea founder Kim Il Sung.

The North's Korean Central News Agency did not say what sorts of crimes would be pardoned or how many inmates would be freed.

The pardons will be the first such dispensations in more than six years.

The measure appears aimed at winning public confidence for Kim Jong Un as the country struggles to revive its troubled economy, said Kim Kwang-in, a researcher at the Seoul-based North Korea Strategy Center.

A U.N. envoy on human rights in North Korea said last year that the country is estimated to hold up to 200,000 people in political prison camps. The North has denied the existence of gulags.

North Korea occasionally marks significant holidays by granting amnesties, and Pyongyang has promoted this year's Kim Il Sung centenary as a significant milestone in the country's history. North Korea last conducted such a special pardon in August 2005 to mark the 60th anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule, according to South Korea's Unification Ministry.

Soldiers and top military officers, meanwhile, pledged to "live or die" with Kim Jong Un and shouted slogans such as "Devoted defense of Kim Jong Un," state television showed. Later Monday, troops later marched outside Kumsusan Memorial Palace, where Kim Il Sung's body lies in state, as thick haze blanketed the plaza.

Neither Kim Jong Un nor senior ruling party officials were seen at the rally.

"We will build a 10,000-fold bulwark for protecting the supreme commander and become rifles and bombs to serve as Kim Jong Un first-line lifeguards and Kim Jong Un first-line death-defying corps," Ri Yong Ho, chief of the military's general staff, said, his voice resonating across the plaza as thousands of troops stood in neat columns.

A large signboard standing from the troops read, "Let's unite, unite and unite around dear comrade Kim Jong Un," the footage showed. In a well-choreographed joint pledge of allegiance, nine troops from army, air force and navy stood in a row and vowed "merciless retaliation" should their enemies attack.

North Korea has staged a series of rallies nationwide vowing to unite around Kim Jong Un and uphold his father's "military-first policy." During a massive public memorial for the elder Kim on Dec. 29, North Korea declared Kim Jong Un "supreme leader" of the ruling Workers' Party, the military and the country.

For the second time since Sunday, state television replayed a documentary focused on Kim Jong Un's military experience that shows him in the cockpit of a tank, galloping by on horseback and poring over documents at night.

North Korea is seeking to extend the Kim dynasty into a third generation as North Korea grapples with chronic food shortages and remains locked in a long-running standoff over its nuclear program.

Pyongyang and Washington recently met for talks on food aid and how to restart nuclear disarmament talks, but those discussions were suspended after Kim Jong Il's death.

The Korean peninsula remains in a state of war because the 1950-53 Korean War ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty. About 28,500 U.S. troops are stationed in South Korea to deter potential North Korean aggression.

AP

In this undated image made from KRT video, North Korea's new young leader Kim Jong Un rides a horse at an undisclosed place in North Korea, aired Sunday, Jan. 8, 2012.

US fires 1st drone in Pakistan in 6 weeks; 4 dead

BANNU, Pakistan (AP)—The U.S. carried out its first drone strike into Pakistan since errant November airstrikes by U.S. forces killed two dozen Pakistani troops along the Afghan border. The latest missile attack killed four militants, three of them Arabs, according to Pakistani intelligence officials.

The drone strike took place Tuesday near Miran Shah in North Waziristan, an al-Qaida and Taliban stronghold that has been pounded by the U.S. since the drone program began in earnest in 2009. The intelligence officials didn't give their names because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Relations with Pakistan plummeted after the Nov. 26 airstrikes prompted Islamabad to shut down vital supply routes into Afghanistan and force the U.S. to vacate Shamsi Air Base in southwestern Baluchistan province. The U.S. used the base to service drones that targeted militants in the tribal regions close to Afghanistan.

American officials say there had been no promise by Washington that drone operations would be avoided since the deadly airstrikes, but that the lull was part of a broad effort to tamp down tensions with Pakistan. While there has long been some level of agreement by Pakistan over the drone attacks, their scope and frequency has been a source of friction between the two countries.

An American investigation into the November airstrikes concluded that a persistent lack of trust between the U.S. and Pakistan, and a series of communications and coordination errors on both sides, led to the attacks. Pakistani officials have rejected that probe and there has been little public sign that relations between the two countries are improving.

There were more than 60 drone attacks last year, significantly less than in 2010. The attacks have killed scores of militants, among them several mid- and high-ranking commanders. American officials don't talk about the program in public, but privately say it has been vital in tamping down the threat from al-Qaida in one of its global hubs.

Human rights activists in Pakistan and abroad have reported significant civilian casualties as a result of the strikes.

The U.S. says the strikes are accurate, but doesn't publicly investigate the allegations.

Japan arrests woman who lived with cult fugitive

TOKYO (AP)—A woman claiming to have lived with a senior member of the doomsday cult behind the 1995 nerve gas attack on Tokyo's subways turned herself in and was arrested Tuesday for helping him evade police for nearly 17 years.

Akemi Saito, also a member of Aum Shinrikyo, gave herself up after Makoto Hirata surrendered to police on New Year's Eve, according to police and Saito's lawyer.

Hirata has refused to explain how he managed to keep underground for so long despite being one of Japan's most-wanted fugitives.

He is suspected of involvement in a cult-related kidnapping-murder in 1995. Later that year, Aum Shinrikyo released sarin nerve gas in Tokyo's subways, killing 13 and injuring more than 6,000.

Saito's lawyer said she lived with Hirata most of the time he was on the run, and police charged her with aiding a fugitive. But the lawyer, Taro Takimoto, said she should be considered as Hirata's common-law wife, which would exclude her from that charge.

Takimoto said Saito has admitted to using an alias and moving frequently to avoid detection. She worked a number of jobs, from coffee shop waitress to health clinic receptionist.

"She said this was the first time she has used her real name in 17 years," he said.

He refused to comment further.

Hirata's sudden reapperance has shocked Japan.

Police initially brushed off Hirata when he tried to turn himself in because they did not recognize him and thought it was a hoax.

According to court testimony, cult members kidnapped, murdered and then burned the body of Kiyoshi Kariya, the brother of a follower trying to quit the group. They put Kariya's body in an incinerator inside the cult's commune and disposed of the ashes in a nearby lake.

Public broadcaster NHK said Hirata has told police he drove Kariya to the compound but has denied other allegations.

Hirata was one of the last three wanted cult members. Nearly 200 members of the cult have been convicted in the gas attack and dozens of other crimes. Thirteen, including cult guru Shoko Asahara, are on death row.

Hirata is also suspected in the near-fatal shooting of Japan's top police official, but the high-profile case was closed last year after the statute of limitations expired.

The cult, renamed Aleph, once had 10,000 members in Japan and claimed another 30,000 in Russia. It still has hundreds of members. The cult is under police surveillance and its new leaders have publicly disavowed Asahara, though he is still believed to be revered by some followers privately.

ASIAN BRIEFS

PH to China: UN should resolve island row

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippines has urged China to bring the two countries' long-standing territorial dispute in the South China Sea to the United Nations for a peaceful resolution. Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario said Tuesday that the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea should be used to "peacefully and finally settle" the countries' conflicting claims. Chinese Embassy officials did not immediately comment. But Beijing claims all of the South China Sea on historical grounds and has in the past said that disputes over territory there, including the Spratly Islands, should be resolved through bilateral negotiations between claimants.

7.3 quake hits off Indonesia; panic, no injuries

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia (AP)—A powerful earthquake hit waters off western Indonesia early Wednesday, prompting officials to briefly issue a tsunami warning. Panicked residents ran from their homes, some fleeing to high ground by car or motorcycle, but there were no reports of injuries or serious damage. The U.S. Geological Survey said the magnitude-7.3 quake struck 260 miles (420 kilometers) off the coast of Aceh province just after midnight. It was centered 18 miles (30 kilometers) beneath the ocean floor. People in the provincial capital, Banda Aceh—still deeply traumatized by the 2004 monster quake and tsunami—poured into the streets as sirens blared from local mosques. Some headed to the hills, choking roads with traffic.

North China tourist city of Xi'an bans large dogs

BEIJING (AP)—A popular tourist city in northern China says it will ban residents from keeping large dogs such as German shepherds in its downtown core. The city of Xi'an in Shaanxi province said in a statement posted on its website late Tuesday that the ban will start Feb. 1. The city has three ring roads, and large dogs will be banned in all areas inside the third ring road. They'll also be banned from some places outside the third ring road. The official Xinhua News Agency said 34 types of dogs would be banned, including violent dogs such as pit bulls.

World

Syrian president vows to crush 'conspiracy'

BEIRUT (AP)—By turns defiant and threatening, President Bashar Assad vowed Tuesday to use an "iron hand" to crush what he called the terrorists and saboteurs behind Syria's 10-month-old uprising in which thousands of people have been killed.

In his first speech since June, Assad showed a steely confidence in the face of the uprising, one of the bloodiest of the Arab Spring. But opponents called it a rambling address by a leader who is dangerously out of touch. Assad repeated his past claims that a foreign conspiracy and terrorists are driving the revolt, not peaceful protesters seeking to reform the country.

"We will not be lenient with those who work with outsiders against the country," Assad said in a nearly two-hour speech at Damascus University in a conference hall packed with cheering supporters. He also issued a veiled threat against those who have yet to choose sides.

"Those who stand in the middle are traitors," Assad said, flanked by Syrian flags. "There is no alternative."

The conflict in Syria is entering a new and heightened phase, with army defectors and some members of the opposition increasingly turning their weapons on government targets. The regime, in turn, has intensified an already deadly military assault, and a U.N. official said Tuesday that about 400 people have been killed in the last three weeks alone, on top of an earlier U.N. estimate of more than 5,000 dead since March.

Since Dec. 23, three mysterious blasts have struck the capital, killing scores of people in the kind of violence more commonly seen in neighboring Iraq. It's unclear who is behind the bombings, which the regime said were suicide attacks.

AP

In this photo released by the Syrian official news agency SANA, Syrian President Bashar Assad deliver a speech at Damascus University, Syria, Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2012.

The regime has blamed "terrorists" for the explosions, saying they proved that Syria was fighting armed gangs. But the opposition accuses forces loyal to the regime of carrying out the attacks as a way to tarnish the uprising.

Assad also denounced the Arab League, which sent a team of observers into Syria in late December to assess whether the regime is abiding by an Arab-brokered peace plan that the regime agreed to on Dec. 19. On Monday, a group of Arab League observers was reportedly attacked in northern Syria, suffering minor injuries.

New deaths were reported Tuesday, with activists saying security forces killed at least 10 people in the eastern city of Deir el-Zour, despite the presence of an Arab observer mission in the area.

Assad, 46, inherited power 11 years ago from his father and has adopted tactics similar to those of other autocratic leaders in the region who scrambled to put down uprisings by unleashing a crackdown on their people.

The formula failed in Tunisia and Egypt, where popular demands increased almost daily—until people accepted nothing less than the ouster of the regime. But Syria's conflict has gone on far longer, and the death toll is mounting daily.

"We will declare victory soon," Assad said, insisting that he still has the support of his people. "When I leave this post, it will be also based upon the people's wishes," he added.

He vowed a strong response to any threats, setting the stage for more violence.

Rage in Nigeria strike fuels fears of unrest

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP)—Thick black smoke and flames rose Tuesday from the burning roadblock that cut off a highway linking Nigeria's mainland to the islands where the oil-rich nation's wealthy live. The bare-chested young men who live under the bridge said they had had enough.

"This is oligarchy, this is not a democracy!" shouted Danjuma Mohammed, clutching a rock in each hand. "We are no longer afraid of you! We are ready for war!"

A paralyzing strike called by labor unions to protest spiraling gasoline prices drew tens of thousands into the streets Tuesday to denounce government corruption in Nigeria, a multiethnic nation often violently divided by those who have and those who have not.

The anger also fueled violence that pitted Christians against Muslims in Nigeria's southwest, where five people were killed in attacks on a mosque and Quranic school.

At least six people were wounded in the attacks in Benin City, Nigerian Red Cross spokesman Nwakpa O. Nwakpa said. On Monday, a mob tried and failed to set a mosque ablaze.

The sectarian violence is among worrying signs of possible countrywide unrest in this nation divided into a mostly Christian south and Muslim north. A radical Islamist sect called Boko Haram has begun killing Christians in the nation's northeast, leading to a call by a prominent Christian leader for worshippers to defend themselves.

The Benin City attack appeared to be a response to those killings.

"It looks like a reprisal from attacks in the north," Nwakpa said. "They took advantage of protests."

The nationwide strike, which began Monday, came after President Goodluck Jonathan removed subsidies on Jan. 1 that had kept gasoline prices low. Overnight, prices at the pump more than doubled, from $1.70 per gallon (45 cents per liter) to at least $3.50 per gallon (94 cents per liter). The costs of food and transportation also doubled in a nation where most live on less than $2 a day.

Jonathan insists the move was necessary to save the country an estimated $8 billion a year, which he promises will go toward badly needed road and public projects. However, protesters—who joined the strike under the slogan of "Occupy Nigeria"—say the time has come to end government corruption in a nation where military rulers and politicians have stolen billions.

More than 10,000 people gathered Tuesday at a park in Lagos, where protests were mostly peaceful. However, crowds were tense elsewhere in the city of 15 million.

Dr. Tayo Konolafe, a gynecologist, led a group of young protesters, shouting that he would be ready to abandon his career and "hold a gun" to bring change in the country.

"Everybody is angry. A hungry man is an angry man," Konolafe declared. "What we are passing through in Nigeria is not poverty—it is penury."

Whether the government can hold back nationwide unrest remains unclear. Soldiers are deployed now in the country's restive central region over fears of ethnic and religious violence, in its northeast to fight Boko Haram and in its oil-rich southern delta to stop militancy. Those operations have had mixed success, while critics say the country's police force is more focused on collecting bribes from civilians than protecting them.

Russia concerned about Iran's uranium enrichment

MOSCOW (AP)—Russia expressed regret and concern Tuesday about Iran's launch of uranium enrichment up to 20 percent at an underground facility, but urged all parties involved in the nuclear standoff with Tehran to avoid hasty moves.

The Russian Foreign Ministry's statement mixed cautious criticism of Iran, an important trading partner, with a call for more talks—a fine line Moscow has walked in the past.

The Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the launch of the work at the facility near Iran's holy city of Qom demonstrated that Tehran was continuing to ignore international concerns about its nuclear program. It added, however, that Iran had notified the International Atomic Energy Agency in due time of its plans for the bunker.

"We hope that Tehran will listen to our opinion about the need for a further close cooperation with the agency and a quick start of serious six-way talks on the Iranian nuclear program without any preconditions," it said.

The IAEA confirmed Monday that Iran has begun enriching uranium up to 20 percent at an underground bunker at the Fordo site near Qom. Even though Tehran announced the move months ago, it increased international fears that Iran is determined to move closer to the ability to make nuclear warheads despite its assurances that its program is aimed exclusively at producing reactor fuel.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said Tuesday that Tehran is breaking its international obligations and demonstrating a "blatant disregard for its responsibilities," adding that enrichment at the Fordo site was especially troubling because Iran previously sought to hide the facility from U.N. monitors. She said "there is no plausible justification" to enrich to 20 percent and that the step brings Iran closer to nuclear weapons capacity.

The Russian Foreign Ministry, meanwhile, said Moscow was urging all parties involved in the Iranian nuclear standoff to avoid "ill-considered and abrupt moves," which could undermine prospects for talks with Iran.

"We confirm that all problems linked with the Iranian nuclear program must be solved exclusively through talks and dialogue based on mutual respect, gradual movement and reciprocity," it said, adding that Russia is ready to help the negotiations.

Russia had treaded a similar path over recent years, alternating criticism of Iran's intransigence with praise for some of its moves and readiness to continue the dialogue. Iran has insisted that its uranium enrichment program is aimed at civilian power generation and research, but Western nations suspect it of serving as a cover for a nuclear weapons bid.

Moscow backed some of the previous U.N. sanctions against Iran, but in recent months has firmly rejected imposing any new sanctions and called for dialogue.

Russia built Iran's first nuclear power plant in the southern port of Bushehr, which began producing electricity in September. Russia's nuclear chief said last November that Iran would like more Russian-built reactors.

Britain's Middle East minister Alistair Burt on Tuesday called on nations opposed to Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons to increase pressure against Tehran.

"A few weeks ago the British government imposed tough new financial restrictions against Iran. These new sanctions make it illegal for any financial institution in the U.K. to have any dealings with any institution in Iran, including the Central Bank of Iran," Burt said, in a speech to the Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan, Israel.

WORLD BRIEFS

US: Mexico kingpin Guzman 'world's most powerful'

MEXICO CITY (AP)—The U.S. Treasury Department called Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman "the world's most powerful drug trafficker" Tuesday. The fugitive Sinaloa cartel leader also got a boost from Mexican actress Kate Del Castillo, who said she believed in Guzman more than in the government. It was the latest in an odd series of encomiums for Guzman, who was included this year on the Forbes list of the world's richest people, with an estimated fortune of $1 billion.

Israel: Disagreements emerge in peace efforts

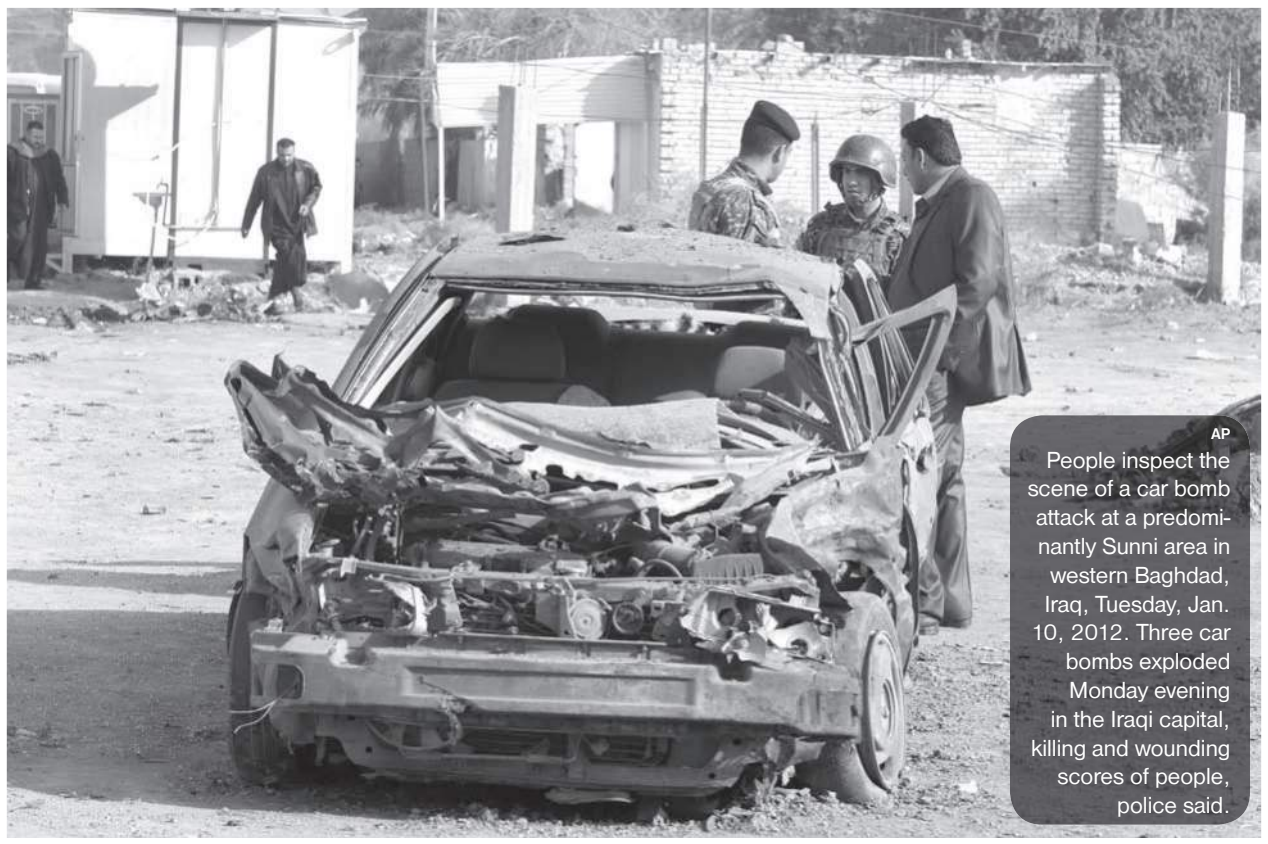
JERUSALEM (AP)—Disagreements have already emerged in nascent negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, an Israeli official said Tuesday, but he said his government remains committed to a year-end target to reaching a final peace deal. The Israeli pronouncement was the first time either side has spoken about the dialogue launched last week in Jordan. The low-level contacts, between the chief Israeli and Palestinian negotiators, are aimed at reviving formal peace talks.

Rains kills at least 28 in southeastern Brazil

JAMAPARA, Brazil (AP)—A mudslide caused by two days of downpours has killed at least 13 people in a small town in southeastern Brazil, and another 11 are listed as missing, the head of the Rio de Janeiro state civil defense department said Tuesday. Sergio Simoes told CBN radio that five bodies were pulled from beneath tons of mud and debris on Tuesday, bringing the death toll in the Jamapara district of Sapucaia city to 13. Eight bodies were found on Monday. Among the missing are five members of a family whose car was caught in the mudslide as they were trying to get away from the area.

Focus

WASHINGTON (AP)—Iraq's troubled start to life without U.S. forces calls into question the Obama administration's assertion that it has wound down America's long war responsibly: at least 78 killed in blasts across the country in a single day last week, a protracted political crisis with no end in sight, top political leaders accusing each other of monstrous criminality.



AP

People inspect the scene of a car bomb attack at a predominantly Sunni area in western Baghdad, Iraq, Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2012. Three car bombs exploded Monday evening in the Iraqi capital, killing and wounding scores of people, police said.

Iraq's plight imperils US goals

By BRADLEY KLAPPER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Editor's Notes: An AP News Analysis

An extension of the costly and unpopular deployment of American troops to Iraq may have only temporarily suppressed some of the tensions, but the heightened violence and political dysfunction illustrate the unfinished business the United States has left behind in Iraq. Nine years after American proponents of intervention predicted a cakewalk, a welcome mat and Iraqis singing and flying kites in a shining example of democracy for the Arab world, the U.S. is still struggling to finish the job.

It is unclear how much more help Iraq wants, either. Last month's send-off of the last U.S. soldiers was inauspiciously followed by Shiite Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki ordering an arrest warrant for the country's highest-ranking Sunni official, threatening to exclude the rival sect's main political party from his government and warning of "rivers of blood" if Sunnis sought an autonomous region.

The Obama administration is defending the military withdrawal from Iraq, after the two countries were unable to agree on whether American troops should be granted legal immunity. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said in an interview aired Sunday that "periodic acts of violence" in Iraq, like those seen recently, are not new and that the thousands of U.S. civilians working there can be safe under Iraqi protection.

"We're confident that we have an Iraqi government and an Iraqi security force that is capable of dealing with the security threats that are there now," Panetta told CBS "Face the Nation."

But President Barack Obama's decision is being attacked by critics during an election year.

"In all due respect, Iraq is unraveling. It's unraveling because we did not keep residual forces there," said Arizona Sen. John McCain, the ranking Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee. McCain also spoke on CBS.

Leading U.S. efforts, the State Department got $6.2 billion in Iraq funds for the year. Some $3.8 billion is for the department's operations, including for the deployment of several hundred diplomats, civil service experts and specialists in fields from agriculture and commerce to health and education. Hundreds more are needed for management, logistics and security support in a land still wracked by violence. Thousands of security contractors are also being employed. The Defense Department got an additional $11 billion to wrap up military operations and fund a leftover contingent of advisers and officials.

The total is a small amount against the backdrop of $1.3 trillion spent on Afghanistan and Iraq over the past decade. Yet it belies any notion that the U.S. and Iraq can easily—or cheaply—"normalize" a relationship that has more often than not been nonexistent over the past four decades.

In Baghdad, the Vatican-sized American Embassy stands like a city within a city, a reminder of the previous administration's ambitious vision of an ironclad U.S.-Iraqi alliance based on shared interests, peace and democracy. By far the biggest such U.S. outpost overseas and costing several hundred million dollars, the danger is it ends up being a symbol of U.S. isolation, its diplomats ensconced safely inside but unable to influence events beyond the fortress walls.

The Obama administration has maintained some of the optimistic Bush-era rhetoric for its vision of the future, while acknowledging that much depends on solving Iraq's immediate problems. When al-Maliki teamed up with Muqtada al-Sadr's hardline Shiite supporters, it guaranteed him the prime minister's office. The U.S. secured a role for Ayad Allawi's Sunni-led bloc after it won the most parliamentary seats, but key decisions on the legislation for the power-sharing arrangement were pushed off. Iraq's Defense and Interior ministries were similarly left for later. Now is later.

One legacy of the occupation that costs money to maintain but could be a key diplomatic tool is the distribution of American diplomats throughout the country. Instead of having all U.S. personnel pooled in the capital, and all its engagement efforts directed solely toward the prime minister and other central government leaders, Washington can simultaneously press the Kurds in the North and Sunnis and Shia at the regional level. While Vice President Joe Biden mobilizes his years of personal relationship with Iraq's political elite at the very top, officials staff consulates in Basra, Irbil and, since Christmas, Kirkuk.

The administration wants to begin lowering costs in Iraq further. The plan envisions local staff replacing Americans in security and logistics, and more food and fuel purchased on local markets. The shift would depend on a more peaceful environment prevailing and the country embarking on a surer democratic path.

But the challenge remains: Can the U.S., with its limited capacity to shape events in Iraq, help forge a culture of nation in a place that may remain too deeply divided among themselves? Al-Maliki's arrest warrant against Sunni Vice President and longtime critic Tariq al-Hashemi for allegedly organizing assassinations leaves the country divided at the upper echelons of government. If the schism reaches down to street level, Iraq risks sliding back toward the civil war-like violence of 2006 and 2007.

Administration officials acknowledge that Iraq is mired in its worst government crisis since Saddam Hussein's 2003 ouster, with no obvious answers for a political landscape crisscrossed by long-standing sectarian and regional rivalries, and newer schisms borne out of political maneuvering. The task is Iraq's now, they insist, with the U.S. only assisting. The main effort right now is focused on pressing Iraq's factional leaders into a meeting of the blocs, but even that first tentative step toward a possible breakthrough remains out of reach.

Getting each party to share in the dibs of power remains the conundrum. Almost two years after Iraq's last elections, and a year since the U.S. helped cobble together a government led by al-Maliki's Shiites and including a Sunni-backed bloc, the parties have yet to agree on who will lead the powerful police and military ministries. America may still wield influence, but it is waning.

For weeks, Washington has pushed hard behind the scenes to bring all sides back to negotiations and salvage Iraq's unity government. The U.S. feeling is that most political parties, unsure of how to solve their crisis themselves, still want America's counsel. Officials say leaders in Iraq know the U.S. remains the country's gateway to a world beyond Iran, and much needed international trade, investment and political support.

But without even a semblance of boots and guns on the ground, the stark truth that Washington hasn't been calling the shots for a while in Iraq has become even more apparent. American advice clearly wasn't heeded as Iraq's stability deteriorated after the U.S. forces departed on Dec. 18.

The administration isn't giving up hope and, frankly it says, it can't: partnership with an instable and democratically imperfect but oil-rich nation on Iran's doorstep is too valuable to abandon. However, getting there isn't cheap. A sense of responsibility also pervades, after a U.S.-led military intervention that sparked fierce internecine warfare and a deadly stream of terror attacks that has yet to be eliminated.

Thursday's bombings, presumably by al-Qaida, are a case in point. State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland on Thursday called them "desperate attempts by the same kind of folk who have been active in Iraq, trying to turn back the clock." On the government impasse, she said American officials from Biden on down were actively "trying to support the Iraqis in settling their disputes peacefully through political means."

The doubts over Iraq are prompting more in Iraq and the U.S. to question whether there will be a time when Washington asks itself why it is bothering with a huge diplomatic outreach, especially if Iraq's splintered leadership isn't interested in listening. Some analysts are looking for more realistic, if narrower, U.S. goals and a clearer strategy to achieve them.

"The question now is whether Iraq is going to be a place for stability or instability, will it be a place where bad guys can do bad things, or a place with 30 million people and huge resources that is secure in its borders and helps stabilize the region," said Jon Alterman, Middle East director at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "We don't know the answer yet."

Bradley Klapper covers foreign policy for The Associated Press.

Moving on

Some numbers of note as the U.S. military departs Iraq.

170,000
Height of U.S. troop strength in Iraq; nearly all will be gone by Christmas

200
Troops that will remain after Jan. 1

3 million
Total pieces of equipment to be removed from the country

400
U.S. combat, medical and transport aircraft flying daily in Iraq at the war's peak

$7.8B
Value of equipment requiring removal

9,000
Truckloads of equipment remaining to be removed; down from 20,000 Sept. 1

$390M
Value of equipment that will be left with the Iraqi government

Amount saved in transport costs by not having to ship the equipment **$685M**

89,000
Number of air conditioners that will be left in Iraq (a value of $18.5 million)

Source: Reuters Graphic: Chicago Tribune

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Environment

Overfishing of western Pacific bigeye tuna continues

NOUMEA, New Caledonia—Overfishing of bigeye tuna continues in the western and central Pacific tuna fishery, the world's biggest tuna fishery, according to the 2010 tuna fishery assessment report released this month by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

Though the species is not at risk of extinction, and is never likely to be, the assessment found that bigeye fishing effort needs to be reduced by at least 32 percent from the average levels for 2006–2009 to ensure long-term sustainability.

Using fisheries and biological data, some going back to the 1950s, SPC has assessed the trends and current stocks of the four tuna species mainly targeted by fishers: skipjack, yellowfin, bigeye, and south Pacific albacore.

The 2010 catch for all four species is estimated at 2,421,113 tonnes, the second highest annual catch on record. It represents 83 percent of the total Pacific Ocean catch and 60 percent of the global tuna catch.

"Overall, the fishery is in the best shape of all the tuna fisheries in the world," said John Hampton, SPC's Oceanic Fisheries program manager. "On a scale of 1–10, we estimate it as 6–7, a green traffic light tinged with orange.

"But there has been an upward trend in total tuna catch for many years, mainly due to increases in purse-seine fishery catches, which accounted for 75 percent of the 2010 catch."

MALO HOSKEN, SPC

SPC tagging vessel coming alongside a purse seine vessel to recover several tags found on fish caught the same day. Tagging is one of the key tools used by SPC to monitor tuna stocks.

Bigeye represents just 5 percent of the fishery's total tuna catch. Most of the bigeye catch is taken in equatorial areas, both by purse seine and longline. The purse-seine fisheries and domestic surface fisheries of the Philippines and Indonesia take large numbers of small bigeye.

The assessment report states that yellowfin, skipjack, and south Pacific albacore tuna stocks are being fished at a moderate level and stocks are reasonably healthy. But Hampton cautions against complacency and stresses the need for responsible management actions to keep the stocks healthy.

"Though some species are being fished within generally accepted levels, this does not mean that there is potential for higher catches," he says. "Now is the time to think about limiting catches, or fishing effort, at around the current levels."

In particular, the report recommends that the yellowfin catch in the western equatorial Pacific be limited to around current levels and that limits on skipjack fishing be considered. ***(Secretariat of the Pacific Community)***

Operation Handbag: Recycling everything inside

By TERRI BENNETT
MCCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS

Most women are familiar with a situation like this—your purse filled to the brim with a whole lot of stuff you just don't need or want. Think about all the business cards, plastic, receipts, pens, and so much more. You can actually Do Your Part with nearly everything inside and avoid dumping any of it into the trash.

Here's what you need to know if you are inundated with receipts and business cards. Paper ones can be tossed right in the recycling bin. Thermal ones are a different story. Some contain BPA—or Bisphenol A—which can actually contaminate the recycling process. Either throw those particular receipts out or shred them to use as packing material. You can find out if your receipt is printed on thermal paper if it makes a mark when you scratch it.

Have old makeup containers? Don't trash them! Origins will actually take back and recycle any make up container. M.A.C. cosmetics will give you a free lipstick when you return six of their primary containers.

Who doesn't have old pens in the bottom of their purse? Billions of pens wind up in our landfills each year. They can be difficult to recycle. The upcycler, TerraCycle works with several companies each year to transform them all into brand new products.

Then there are old gift cards and cancelled credit cards that we all have stashed in our wallets. More than 70 million pounds of these plastic cards are trashed each year. Recycle them instead. The Earthworks organization is one place that can help you. They'll provide information on how to send them all in and get them recycled for free.

And what about keys you no longer need? Metal is valuable and easily recyclable. Keys For Hope and Keys For Kindness are two organizations that collect unwanted keys for fundraising. Or, you usually can drop them off at full service recycling centers and scrap yards.

As for your wallet—and your purse—itself? When you no longer use them—donate them. Dress for Success is an organization that helps disadvantaged women find work. They accept all items that would help a job seeker present a professional image.

See? There's really no need to throw any of it out. With a few smarter choices you can do your part to find recycling solutions for practically everything in your purse.

TASI WATCH PROJECT

The Mariana Islands Nature Alliance performed an invasive species removal activity at the Lau Lau Bay beach on Saturday, Jan. 7, 2012, from 8:30am to 10:30am. MINA would like to thank its outstanding volunteers from Saipan Southern High School's YEA Club, Kagman High School and their JROTC, Northern Marianas Academy, and Division of Environmental Quality. All who participated in the activity received a Tasi Watch t-shirt and reusable gloves. The MINA Tasi Watch Project for Lau Lau Bay beach began in 2011 and will continue to provide outreach and assist in the maintenance for a clean and healthy Lau Lau Bay Beach for the CNMI community. For information about volunteering, contact the MINA office at 233-REEF.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

DO YOUR PART

Put your recycling routine on steroids

By TERRI BENNETT
MCCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS

Do you ever drive around your neighborhood and notice who the big time recyclers are—or aren't? Do you ever feel guilty when you put something in the trash because you don't feel like walking to the recycling bin? Do you toss food scraps in with the other garbage? If you said yes, you're not alone. Only a third of the trash that could be recycled or composted actually is. No wonder the average household trashcan is always overflowing! That means we can all do a bit better. I want to share some simple techniques to Do Your Part and put your recycling routine on steroids.

How did my own family go from being mild-mannered, casual recyclers into caped crusaders for recycling? First, I made a list of all the items we use regularly in our home that could be recycled and posted the list prominently. Then, my family and I discussed our plan of attack. We decided that we could make it just as easy to recycle, as it was to toss things in the trash.

To make it as convenient as possible, we placed a collection container everywhere in the house where recyclables are typically generated but maybe not always near the main recycling bin. Common places are kitchens, bathrooms, and home offices. We placed boxes under every desk to collect paper. A container went into each bathroom because virtually everything that comes out of the bathroom is recyclable, from toothbrushes, to soap boxes, to shampoo bottles. And of course, our biggest recycling bin went in the kitchen. A second trashcan, a laundry basket, or even an old cardboard box can serve to collect the dry or empty materials for recycling. Every week or two, we empty these containers into our main recycling collection bin.

Then, there are the items that we should recycle but often don't because they can't be put in the curbside bin. The list includes fluorescent light bulbs, batteries, electronics, and other household waste like old paints and pesticides. These items can contain toxic materials and should never be dumped in a landfill. Visit DoYourPart.com/Columns for help finding solutions to even the trickiest recycling problems where you live.

So now, what about all the food we trash every week? It might make you sick to your stomach to find out that's what does happen to about a third of the food we buy. There's a way to recycle those scraps too and the result is free fertilizer for your lawn and garden. Composting doesn't have to be time consuming or difficult. Watch our short video on how to get started at DoYourPart.com/Columns.

And remember, the recycling loop doesn't end when you put something in your recycling bin. Close the loop by shopping for products that can be recycled, are made from recycled materials or are packaged in material that can be recycled. For example, if you can't easily recycle juice cartons where you live, choose to buy juice in plastic, aluminum or glass containers, which are easily recycled.

When we all beef up our recycling routines, we're turning trash into treasure and conserving our natural resources. As we begin the New Year, Do Your Part and pledge to put your recycling routine on steroids.

Terri Bennett is a veteran TV meteorologist, author, and founder of DoYourPart, everyday green living ideas that are better for you and the planet. Send questions to terri@doyourpart.com and follow DoYourPart on Facebook and Twitter.

Life & Style

Can you say that on TV? The Supreme Court debates

WASHINGTON (AP)—In colorful give and take, the Supreme Court debated whether policing curse words and nudity on broadcast television makes sense in the cable era, one justice suggesting the policy is fast becoming moot as broadcast TV heads the way of "vinyl records and 8-track tapes."

The case involves programing that is available to all viewers free over the air—even though many now receive it through paid cable connections—during hours when children are likely to be watching.

Some justices said they were troubled by inconsistent standards that allowed certain words and displays in some contexts but not in others.

One example frequently cited by the networks was the Federal Communications Commission's decision not to punish ABC for airing "Saving Private Ryan," with its strong language, while objecting to the same words when uttered by celebrities on live awards shows.

Justice Elena Kagan said the FCC policy was, "Nobody can use dirty words or nudity except Steven Spielberg," director of the World War II movie. Other justices seemed more open to maintaining the current rules because they allow parents to put their children in front of the television without having to worry they will be bombarded by vulgarity.

Chief Justice John Roberts, the only member of the court with young children, hammered away at that point. Robert wondered why broadcasters would oppose FCC regulation, especially when cable and satellite service can offer hundreds of channels with few restrictions.

AP

In this Dec. 9, 2002, file photo, Cher accepts a lifetime achievement award at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas during the Billboard Music Awards show. During the show Cher used the F-word.

"All we are asking for, what the government is asking for, is a few channels where ... they are not going to hear the S-word, the F-word, they are not going to see nudity."

Justice Antonin Scalia placed himself on the side of the government. "These are public airwaves. The government is entitled to insist upon a certain modicum of decency. I'm not sure it even has to relate to juveniles, to tell you the truth."

But at least one justice, Samuel Alito, talked about how rapidly technological change has effectively consigned vinyl records and 8-tracks to the scrap heap, suggesting that in a rapidly changing universe, time will take care of the dispute. Already nearly nine of 10 households subscribe to cable or satellite television and viewers can switch among broadcast and other channels with a button on their remote controls.

"I'm sure your clients will continue to make billions of dollars on their programs which are transmitted by cable and by satellite and by Internet. But to the extent they are making money from people who are using rabbit ears, that is disappearing," Alito said.

The First Amendment case involves programing received by antennas on top of a television set, a house or building. Much of that programing now also is available through cable and satellite connections, but only the over-the-air transmissions are at issue.

The case pits the Obama administration against the nation's television networks. The material at issue includes the isolated use of expletives as well as fines against broadcasters who showed a woman's nude buttocks on a 2003 episode of ABC's "NYPD Blue."

The broadcasters want the court to overturn a 1978 decision that upheld the FCC's authority to regulate radio and television content, at least during the hours when children are likely to be watching or listening. That includes the prime-time hours before 10 p.m.

At the very least, the networks say the FCC's current policy is too hard to figure out and penalizes the use of particular words in some instances but not in others.

The administration said that even with the explosion of entertainment options, broadcast programing remains dominant. It also needs to be kept as a dependable "safe haven" of milder programing, the administration said.

Solicitor General Donald Verrilli Jr. said that if the court were to overrule its 33-year-old decision, "the risk of a race to the bottom is real."

But Carter Phillips, representing the networks in connection with the awards shows, said that little would change because broadcasters would remain sensitive to advertisers and viewers who don't want the airwaves filled with dirty words and nudity.

Phillips and former Solicitor General Seth Waxman, arguing on behalf of ABC, noted that broadcasters could face fines from thousands of pending complaints, including some relating to the broadcast of the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing. The opening ceremonies "included a statue very much like some of the statues that are here in this courtroom, that had bare breasts and buttocks," Waxman said.

As some justices turned their gaze toward the sculpted marble panels at the top of the courtroom, Waxman pointed to the one above the bench and said, "Right over here, Justice Scalia."

No one mentioned that those sculptures don't appear on television, because the high court does not allow cameras.

The FCC policy under attack flowed from the court's 1978 Pacifica decision, which upheld the FCC's reprimand of a New York radio station for its mid-afternoon airing of a George Carlin monologue containing a 12-minute string of expletives.

For many years, the FCC did not take action against broadcasters for one-time uses of curse words. But, following several awards shows with cursing celebrities in 2002 and 2003, the FCC toughened its policy. It concluded that a one-free-expletive rule did not make sense as a way of keeping the airwaves free of indecency when children are likely to be watching television.

UK literary prize honors art of the hatchet job

By JILL LAWLESS
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON (AP) — A new literary prize aims to reward book reviews with edge.

The Hatchet Job of the Year Award honors "the angriest, funniest, most trenchant" review published in a newspaper or magazine in 2011.

Eight finalists for the prize were announced Tuesday. They include classicist Mary Beard's dismissal of Robert Hughes' "Rome"—"little short of a disgrace"—and Leo Robson's verdict on Rachel Bradford's "Martin Amis: The Biography." He said it was "full of spectacularly bad writing—about spectacularly good writing."

The shortlist also includes Geoff Dyer's underwhelmed reaction to Julian Barnes' Booker Prize-winning "The Sense of an Ending."

"It isn't terrible," Dyer wrote. "It is just so ... average."

That counts as a rave compared to Camilla Long's review of Monique Roffey's "With the Kisses of His Mouth." She called it "a pointlessly explicit, infuriatingly naive and, at times, plain off-putting slither through a series of—willfully? maliciously?—unedited sexual slurpings."

The prize, set up by the arts review aggregating website The Omnivore, will be awarded Feb. 7. The winner will be chosen by a jury including biographer D.J. Taylor and journalists Suzi Feay, Rachel Johnson and Sam Leith.

MINISTRY OF GOSSIP

The gospel on celebrity and pop culture

Katy Perry won't appear at People's Choice Awards

Katy Perry seemed to be everywhere in 2011, but aside from the occasional tweet, she's lying low so far in 2012—yes, a big divorce announcement will put a damper on your public interactions. The singer was to have made her first big post-split appearance at the People's Choice Awards on Wednesday, but she's now backed out of that plan.

"Unfortunately I will not be able to attend the People's Choice Awards. I want to thank u all for voting for me, fingers crossed! #KATYCATS," Perry wrote Monday on Twitter. She didn't elaborate on her reasons for canceling, but a desire to avoid media questions about her divorce seems plausible.

Perry was expected to appear to pick up at least a few of the seven awards for which she is nominated, including favorite female artist, favorite pop artist and song of the year. (The general rule of thumb is that if you're showing up at People's Choice, you're not going home empty-handed.)

Chances are much better that Perry will be in attendance in mid-February at the Grammy Awards, where she's nominated for record of the year and pop solo performance.

Over the weekend, Perry returned to Twitter to address her divorce for the first time, admonishing fans, "Concerning the gossip, I want to be clear that NO ONE speaks for me. Not a blog, magazine, 'close sources' or my family."

Perry's husband, comedian Russell Brand, filed for divorce Dec. 30. ***(Patrick Kevin Day)***

Five A-list moments from Palm Springs: Clooney, Pitt and more

Why do we love the Palm Springs International Film Festival? Think of it as famous fish in a barrel—among them Brad Pitt, George Clooney and more.

Far from the luxury enclaves of Los Angeles, some of the brightest stars come together for the annual awards gala and cozy after-party in the desert oasis. Here are our five A-list moments from Saturday's opening fete:

George Clooney meets the French, well, George Clooney: Jean Dujardin caught our eye (and that of the critical mass) for his turn in the well-received "The Artist." The French actor may be a new face for the U.S. but is quite often referred to as "the George Clooney of France." So what happened when the domestic met the foreign?

"They met near the talent valet," an onlooker told the Ministry. "They shook hands and complimented one another." In a much more thrilling introduction, Dujardin's "Arist" costar Bérénice Bejo got a kiss from Clooney.

"George gave a kiss to Bérénice, and she lit up! She joked that though she's madly in love with Michel (Hazanavicius, director of "The Artist"), that made it the best night of her life," the witness said.

The potty mouths: The pageantry of these galas can test anyone's boundaries for the appropriate. Thankfully, the Vanguard award winners at PSIFF were the gang from "Young Adult"—far from a warm and cuddly film, the filmmakers gave the night some edge.

"If you haven't seen it yet, you're an [individual with questionable taste]," Olivia Wilde said bluntly, presenting the award to director Jason Reitman, screenwriter Diablo Cody and stars Charlize Theron and Patton Oswalt.

Not to be outdone, Oswalt accepted the award on behalf of the group and praised the nonstop work ethic of Reitman, Cody and Theron. Of his own craft?

"I (convey blue humor) in comedy clubs," Oswalt said frankly about his bawdy stand-up act. Patton also said he was entrusted with the acceptance speech because his counterparts were, well, hammered.

"The Vanguard award winners are the drunkest," he said, which we at the Ministry like to translate as, "The Vanguard award winners are (clearly the daintiest when it comes to imbibing)."

The gracious: For every potty mouth, there should be one or two speeches that are full of genuine gratitude and that moment of transcendence from show business to showing grace. Those moments belonged to Octavia Spencer and Michelle Williams.

Spencer recalled her long journey to the most celebrated performance of "The Help" and got everyone a little misty when she said her goal was to "walk with kings but not lose the common touch."

Williams, with her pixie cut and breathy thank-yous, paid tribute to Marilyn Monroe, whom she portrays in "My Week With Marilyn."

SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS/MCT

Katy Perry, right, performs at the HP Pavilion in San Jose, California, on Friday, August 12, 2011.

"She never got the recognition she deserved when she was alive," Williams noted. Her costar Kenneth Branagh presented to her, and Williams stuck close to him throughout the evening as she received kudos on her performance from countless folks.

Jonah Hill, dance machine: Over at the gala's after-party, at the Parker Palm Springs, the "Young Adult" cast continued with libations at a private table and Adrien Brody circulated solo—but the night belonged to Jonah Hill. After presenting an acting prize to his "Moneyball" costar Brad Pitt, Hill took the floor with some blonds at the bash—and danced for hours. We mean, like, danced his face off. Good for you, Jonah.

The inevitable Brangelina: Yes, they came. Yes, everyone was excited. And that's about that. Oh, yes, the cane on the red carpet was because he hurt his knee when he slipped while carrying daughter Vivienne.

Pitt made a tidy speech paying respect to both projects he was praised for this year, "Tree of Life" and "Moneyball." But even Pitt's highlight came courtesy of his "Moneyball" costar.

Brad made sure to thank "my lover, Jonah Hill." ***(Matt Donnelly)***

Ministry of Gossip: http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/gossip/

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The Darkest Hour

Friday		4:25	7:25	9:40
Saturday	1:25	4:25	7:25	9:40
Sunday	1:25	4:25	7:25	
Monday thru Thursday		4:25	7:25	

Emile Hirsch, Olivia Thirlby
Science, Fiction • Rated PG 13

Synopsis

Director Chris Gorak (Right at Your Door) teams with producer Timur Bekmambetov for this tense apocalyptic thriller centering on the fight for survival waged by five youths who find themselves stranded in Moscow during an alien invasion. As the invisible extraterrestrials absorb all of Earth's energy and life forms, finding a means of escaping the unstoppable attackers becomes a seemingly impossible task. Emile Hirsch, Olivia Thirlby, and Max Minghella star.

We Bought A Zoo

Friday		4:10	7:10	9:30
Saturday	1:10	4:10	7:10	9:30
Sunday	1:10	4:10	7:10	
Monday thru Thursday		4:10	7:10	

Matt Damon, Scarlett Johansson
Comedy, Drama • Rated PG

Synopsis

A widower (Matt Damon) purchases a zoo in order to bring his family back together in this Twentieth Century Fox adaptation of Benjamin Mee's autobiographical memoir. Cameron Crowe (Almost Famous) writes and directs based on a script by Aline Brosh McKenna.

★ ★ ★

The Adventure of Tintin

Friday		4:30	7:30	9:50
Saturday	1:30	4:30	7:30	9:50
Sunday	1:30	4:30	7:30	
Monday thru Thursday		4:30	7:30	

Jamie Bell, Andy Serkis
Adventure • Rated PG

Mission Impossible: Ghost Protocol

Friday		4:15	7:15	9:55
Saturday	1:15	4:15	7:15	9:55
Sunday	1:15	4:15	7:15	
Monday thru Thursday		4:15	7:15	

Tom Cruise, Jeremy Renner
Spy film, Action • Rated PG 13

The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo

Friday		4:00	7:00	10:00
Saturday	1:00	4:00	7:00	10:00
Sunday	1:00	4:00	7:00	
Monday thru Thursday		4:00	7:00	

Daniel Craig, Rooney Mara
Thriller • Rated R

Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked

Friday		4:20	7:20	9:35
Saturday	1:20	4:20	7:20	9:35
Sunday	1:20	4:20	7:20	
Monday thru Thursday		4:20	7:20	

Jason Lee
Children's/family • Rated G

Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows

Friday		4:05	7:05	9:45
Saturday	1:05	4:05	7:05	9:45
Sunday	1:05	4:05	7:05	
Monday thru Thursday		4:05	7:05	

Robert Downey, Jr. Jude Law
Action, Mystery • Rated PG 13

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Longoria looks on bright side of divorce stats

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—Eva Longoria knows marriage can be tough, but she was startled to hear what a "Desperate Housewives" co-star had to say on the subject.

Longoria, who split in 2010 from athlete-husband Tony Parker, was promoting her ABC show Tuesday with other cast members at a Television Critics Association meeting.

Felicity Huffman, discussing her character's marital woes on "Desperate Housewives," claimed that 60 percent of first marriages and 80 percent of second unions end in divorce. Huffman didn't cite a source for the percentages.

Longoria, with exaggerated panic, responded, "It gets higher?"

Then she looked on the bright side, suggesting the third time would be the charm.

"Desperate Housewives" will end its eight-year run this season on ABC.

AP

Eva Longoria, a cast member in the ABC series "Desperate Housewives," takes part in a panel discussion on the show at the Disney ABC Television Critics Association Press Tour, Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2012, in Pasadena, Calif.

'SVU' actress speaks as victim of real-life theft

NEW YORK (AP) — "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit" actress Tamara Tunie spoke out Tuesday about being a real-life crime victim, saying her former business manager exploited her trust to steal more than $1 million she earned by working doggedly at a peak in her career.

Blasting Joseph Cilibrasi as a "menace to society" as he was sentenced to 2 1/2 to 7 1/2 years in prison, Tunie said he insinuated himself into her life by joining in birthday parties, weddings and other family events, only to use that closeness to embezzle from her and leave a lasting hole in her family's finances.

"Show business is fickle, and though I have been blessed with a healthy career, who knows how long that will last?" Tunie told a Manhattan court. "As an African-American woman, roles are few and far between, and I cannot reasonably hope to replace what was stolen."

Tunie

Cilibrasi, 51, pleaded guilty in the fall to stealing from Tunie and other clients, including screenwriter Janet Roach and Kansas City Symphony music director Michael Stern. Cilibrasi used some of the stolen cash to finance his own forays into entertainment, including investing in movies and Broadway shows and hiring a screenwriter to pen a script about a historic building, the Manhattan district attorney's office said.

Cilibrasi didn't speak at his sentencing. His lawyer, Gerald Shargel, said Cilibrasi has accepted responsibility and expressed remorse.

In pleading guilty in November to grand larceny and other charges, Cilibrasi admitted he stole more than $1.4 million from Tunie by writing checks to himself from her accounts without her permission and by secretly opening a credit card account in her name, then getting his own card on the account by falsely listing himself as her husband.

The thefts came between 2000 and 2009, years Tunie described as a career high. Best known for playing medical examiner Melinda Warner for more than a decade on NBC's "Law & Order: SVU," Tunie also has appeared in Fox's "24" and other series in such films as 1997's "The Peacemaker," starring George Clooney and Nicole Kidman.

"Often working three jobs at once, I was able to earn enough to provide a comfortable living for me and my family," she told the court, noting that she supports her 77-year-old mother and helps nieces and nephews pay for college.

"The ramifications of Joseph Cilibrasi's acts will continue to play out and affect us for the rest of our lives," the actress said in a strong voice that occasionally wavered with emotion.

In cultivating his clients as friends, Cilibrasi "preys on people who believe they know him, who count on him for his expertise" and rely on his professional ethics, Manhattan Assistant District Attorney Peirce R. Moser told the court Tuesday.

Cilibrasi acknowledged in his guilty plea that he stole $75,000 from the Kansas City Symphony's Stern by pocketing checks he told Stern to write to cover some federal and Missouri state taxes. Stern was hit with tax penalties because the money never got to authorities, Cilibrasi said.

Cilibrasi also acknowledged opening a credit-card account in the name of another client, screenwriter Janet Roach. Her credits include 1985's "Prizzi's Honor," starring Jack Nicholson and Kathleen Turner.

Stern said in a letter to the court that he'd endured years of tax trouble because of Cilibrasi, whom he'd trusted as a friend but now considers "a con man through and through and a born liar."

Roach said in a phone interview in November she was saddened that Cilibrasi "brought this upon himself" but was glad the matter was resolved.

IN NATALIE WOOD CASE

Authorities: No new evidence

LOS ANGELES (AP)—No new evidence has been uncovered in the death of Natalie Wood that would point to foul play, authorities said Tuesday.

Los Angeles County Sheriff's chief of detectives William McSweeney told the Los Angeles Times that several weeks of interviews and other investigative work have not uncovered any evidence the death was a homicide. It had been ruled as an accident.

Cold cases like Wood's are never really closed and detectives are still looking at some aspects of the case, said McSweeney. The investigation was reopened in November, when detectives said several sources came forward with new information.

Natalie Wood died sometime after the evening of Nov. 28, 1981, when the 43-year-old actress was boating off Catalina Island with her husband Robert Wagner and actor Christopher Walken. The evening before the drowning, Wood, Wagner and Walken, who was Wood's co-star in the film "Brainstorm," had dinner at a restaurant on the island.

Authorities said they returned to the yacht and had drinks and that Wagner and Walken got into an argument.

Walken went to bed, according to Wagner, who, after staying up with boat captain Dennis Davern, went looking for his wife and couldn't find her on board. He then noticed that a dinghy attached to the boat—and his wife—were gone.

Lifeguard captain Roger Smith told the Times in November that the actress could have been saved if officials had been called sooner to search for her. Smith said he was alerted that Woods was missing at 5:11 a.m. the next day.

Based on the condition of her body when she was pulled from the water, Smith said he believes she survived for some time in the water and was washed out to sea.

Levitan surprised at acceptance of gay characters

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—One of the biggest surprises for the creator of "Modern Family" is how Cameron and Mitchell, the gay parents who are among the show's lead characters, are accepted by the audience.

Steven Levitan said Tuesday that it's not just America: The Emmy-winning comedy is shown around the world, including in Vatican City. He said it's unusual for him to hear any objections to Mitchell and Cameron, portrayed by actors Jesse Tyler Ferguson and Eric Stonestreet.

He said at a news conference that it's easy for people to object to gay parents in concept.

"When you make it personal and show the people have good hearts and are extremely committed, loving parents, it's hard not to love them," he said. "I'm pleasantly surprised with the world's reaction to that particular part of our modern family."

Levitan said he and his staff impose a lot of pressure on themselves to keep standards up, even though creative ups and downs are almost unavoidable for long-running TV series.

"We don't want to be accused of getting soft or resting on our laurels," he said. "That keeps us on our toes or awake at night."

Cast, crew of "The Bourne Legacy" arrive in Manila

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Officials say the cast and crew of the Hollywood action thriller "The Bourne Legacy" have arrived and will start shooting a portion of the film in the Philippine capital on Wednesday.

The fourth of the blockbuster "Bourne" series based on the spy novels of Robert Ludlum will be shot around the Philippines for a month. It stars Jeremy Renner, Rachel Weisz and Edward Norton but not Matt Damon, the star of first three "Bourne" films.

Francis Tolentino, head of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, said Tuesday he is fielding 120 crowd control personnel to assist traffic enforcers during the first day of shooting in Manila's Malate tourist district.

President Benigno Aquino III's spokesman Edwin Lacierda says the movie will boost tourism and provide jobs.

TOP TEN

iTunes' Official Music Charts for the week ending Jan. 9, 2012:

Top Songs:

1. **"I Won't Give Up,"** Jason Mraz
2. **"Set Fire to the Rain,"** ADELE
3. **"Sexy and I Know It,"** LMFAO
4. **"We Found Love** (feat. Calvin Harris)," Rihanna
5. "Good Feeling," Flo Rida
6. **"Young, Wild & Free** (feat. Bruno Mars)," Wiz Khalifa, Snoop Dogg
7. **"Ni(asterisk)(asterisk) as in Paris,"** Kanye West, JAY Z
8. **"It Will Rain,"** Bruno Mars
9. **"The One That Got Away,"** Katy Perry
10. **"Party Rock Anthem** (feat. Lauren Bennett & GoonRock)," LMFAO

Top Albums:

1. **"21"**, ADELE
2. **"These Times,"** Safety-Suit
3. **"Bangarang,"** Skrillex
4. **"Take Care,"** Drake
5. **"El Camino,"** The Black Keys
6. **"Ceremonials,"** Florence + The Machine
7. **"Mylo Xyloto,"** Coldplay
8. **"Beyond Magnetic,"** Metallica
9. **"Stronger,"** Kelly Clarkson
10. **"Talk That Talk,"** Rihanna

William Shatner to star in a one-man Broadway show

NEW YORK (AP)—William Shatner is boldly going back to where he once appeared—Broadway.

The actor, singer and writer best known as James T. Kirk on "Star Trek" will star in a one-man show called "Shatner's World: We Just Live in It." Previews begin Feb. 14 and it runs at the Music Box Theatre until March 4.

Producers said Tuesday "The two-hour show will take audiences on a voyage through Shatner's life and career, from Shakespearean stage actor to internationally known icon and raconteur."

Shatner was last on Broadway in "A Shot in the Dark" in 1961. The former "T.J. Hooker" star won an Emmy for his work on "Boston Legal."

AP

In this May 19, 2010 file photo, actor William Shatner attends the CBS Upfront presentation in New York.

His other Broadway credits include "Tamburlaine the Great" in 1956 and "The World of Suzie Wong" two years later.

'Designing Women' star Potts takes on new role

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—Former "Designing Women" star Annie Potts is connecting with her TV and family roots in the new ABC series "GCB."

Potts plays a Dallas socialite in the prime-time comedy-drama also known as "Good Christian Belles." She says she sees a lot of "my beloved Dixie Carter" in the show. Carter, who died at age 70 in 2010, starred with Potts in CBS' "Designing Women" sitcom that aired from 1986 to 1993.

Potts told the Television Critics Association on Tuesday that her "GCB" character, Gigi, also reflects Potts' own mother. Series executive producer Robert Harling is a longtime friend of Potts and called her mom, Dot, "magnificent."

Potts

Potts' mother died a year ago. With a smile, Potts said they can use all her stories in "GCB."

The series, which debuts March 4 on ABC, also stars Kristin Chenoweth, David James Elliott and Leslie Bibb.

Bibb plays Amanda, a former teenage "mean girl" who goes home to mom (Potts) after her marriage breaks up and has to readjust to a tough world of money and gossip.

The "GCB" title is a cleaned-up version of "Good Christian Bitches," the 2008 novel by Kim Gatlin that inspired the series. Harling said the series is a "love letter to Texas" and is about a faith-based group of people but not any particular religion.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Letter discovered in Louis XV desk at Versailles

PARIS (AP)—For 67 years, a message from Nazi-occupied France remained hidden in a secret drawer of a desk that belonged to France's 18th century King Louis XV. Restorers at the Chateau of Versailles recently discovered the letter, written by a World War II-era colleague who last restored the bronze-coated bureau. The letter, released Tuesday by the chateau, details restoration work on the desk during the war. The restorer says he wrote the note after he finished the work—just as Paris was being liberated from the Nazis in August 1944. The letter was found in one of the desk's many small drawers, which can be opened only by a complex mechanical system of secret buttons and locks considered cutting-edge in its day.

Chinese artist Ai Weiwei brings work to Washington

WASHINGTON (AP)—Sculptures by an outspoken Chinese artist are going on display at Smithsonian museums in Washington. Chinese artist Ai Weiwei was detained for three months last year in China for speaking against the government. The Smithsonian's Sackler Gallery said on Tuesday that it will display the contemporary art piece "Fragments" by Ai in May. The work has not been shown before in the United States. The Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum also plans to open a companion exhibit later this year called "Ai Weiwei: According to What?" Under terms of Ai's bail, he is prohibited from leaving Beijing until June, so he is unlikely to see the Washington exhibits in person.

Danish queen sees no need for cell phone

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP)—Denmark's Queen Margrethe says she rules Europe's oldest monarchy just fine without modern inventions like the Internet or cell phones. The figurehead monarch and head of state told reporters Tuesday that while other members of her family "find it amusing that I don't use a mobile phone" she doesn't feel she needs one. Asked by a Norwegian reporter about her lack of interest in modern tools of communication, 71-year-old Margrethe said she finds it "very peaceful" to be offline. She added cheerfully: "I am doing just fine the way things are, thank you." The queen spoke to journalists at Copenhagen's Amalienborg Palace ahead of celebrations this weekend marking her 40 years on Denmark's throne. Her family traces its lineage back to Viking kings in the 10th century.

Placido Domingo wins Israel's Wolf Prize

JERUSALEM (AP) — Acclaimed tenor Placido Domingo has been named a winner of Israel's prestigious Wolf Prize, along with seven other American, British and Israeli recipients. The Wolf Foundation said Tuesday that Domingo is the first vocal artist to ever win its prize. From 1962 to 1965, at the beginning of his career, he sang with the Israeli opera company. Each year the Wolf Foundation awards $100,000 prizes in five fields. About three dozen winners have gone on to receive Nobel Prizes. Domingo shared the award with English conductor Sir Simon Rattle. Israeli physicist Jacob D. Bekenstein won the physics prize. The others went to U.S.-based scientists, including chemists A. Paul Alivisatos and Charles M. Lieber, mathematicians Michael Aschbacher and Luis Caffarelli, and in medicine, Ronald M. Evans.

ABC chief doesn't 'get' transgenders' complaint

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—ABC's entertainment chief says he just doesn't "get" complaints made by transgender people about the network's new sitcom. The series "Work It" that debuted last week portrays two men who dress as women to land jobs in a tough economy. The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation said it was offensive to transgenders because it makes fun of the idea of men wearing women's clothes. ABC Entertainment President Paul Lee said Tuesday: "I didn't get it, but maybe it's me." He compared "Work It" to the movie "Tootsie." The Nielsen company said 6.2 million people watched the first episode. That's a decent, but not fast, start.

Woman uninterested in marriage gets pressure from her family

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DearAbby

DEAR ABBY: I am a very feminine 23-year-old woman who lives at home with my father. I am completely uninterested in getting married or having children now or in the future. I don't believe it's the end of the world to be a woman and not want children, but my dad and my grandmother act as though I'm abnormal. Dad says he blames himself for "failing to raise me right."

He also blames himself for the fact that I'm not interested in guys. The thought of being intimate with a guy is disgusting to me. I identify as mostly asexual, although I have had passing infatuations with women. Dad takes this personally like HE is responsible for my desires, or lack thereof. Grandma is worse. She constantly makes excuses to my male friends about how I'm just "not ready yet" and that they should be "patient."

Abby, I know nothing I say will change their minds, but is there something I can do to make them understand they didn't fail? This is who I AM. How can I end the guilt trip and keep the peace?

BORN THIS WAY IN NORTH CAROLINA

DEAR BORN THIS WAY: People who have no sexual feelings are asexual. People who are attracted to members of the same sex are gay, and they, too, are born that way. It has nothing to do with the way they are raised.

You cannot live your life trying to please your father and grandmother, and you have nothing to apologize for. If you need help explaining why you are the way you are, contact PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), an organization that can provide you with literature that will explain it to them. You can find more information at www.pflag.org.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 37-year-old wife and mother of three. My mother visits us when she's in town during work-related trips, so it's not like she's around all day, thank heavens. But when she's here she constantly corrects my children (ages 8, 14 and 18) and instructs my husband and me how we should spend our money. She also doesn't like it when I swear (which I usually don't do unless she's around) or mention what I think of people she has sent my way who have burned me.

By the time she leaves—usually four days—I am so stressed and emotional that I cry at the drop of a hat. I cannot, nor do I want to, continue to have her here when she doesn't respect my rules. I respect her rules when I visit her home.

Obviously, there is much more, but I'm stressed to the max and nearly at the point of being done. Abby, can you give me any pointers to deal with this?

VISIT OR NOT?

DEAR VISIT OR NOT?: After you have calmed down, and before your mother's next "raid," write her a letter. Explain that while you love her, her visits are taking a significant emotional toll on you. Say she is welcome as long as she refrains from correcting your children because that's YOUR job. Say also that she must stop telling you what to do with your money and correcting your language because you're an adult now. Remind her not to send any more people your way, and why. If she can accept those terms, she'll be welcomed with open arms. Some people need ground rules spelled out for them, and your mother appears to be one of them.

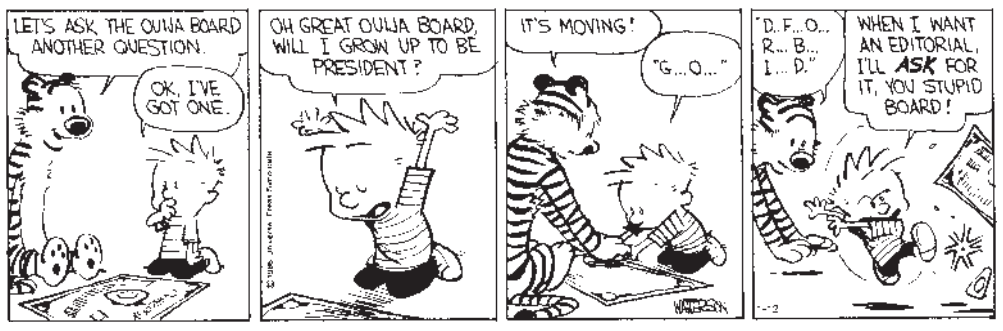
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby—Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


LET'S ASK THE OUIJA BOARD ANOTHER QUESTION.
OK, I'VE GOT ONE.
OH GREAT OUIJA BOARD, WILL I GROW UP TO BE PRESIDENT?
IT'S MOVING!
"G...O..."
"D..F...O... R... B... I... D."
WHEN I WANT AN EDITORIAL, I'LL ASK FOR IT, YOU STUPID BOARD!

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

BURP! BURP! BURP! BURP!
BURP! BURP! BURP! BURP!
ARE YOU QUITE THROUGH?!
THE GOOD TIMES CAN'T LAST FOREVER, PAL
JIMDAVIS 1-12
Distributed by Universal Uclick www.facebook.com/garfield
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Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

HOW MANY KIDS IN YOUR FAMILY, PERCY?
I HAVE 12 SIBLINGS.
ALL NAMED AFTER FAMOUS POETS. MY MOTHER JUST LOVES POETRY.
12 KIDS, WOW!
THE ROMANTIC POETS, I'D BET.
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The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Volcanic spillage
5 Solo of "Star Wars"
8 Bang the door loudly
12 Troop group
13 Inseparable
14 Caffeine-rich nut
15 Swag
16 Twitch
17 Terrible guy?
18 Loosen a sneaker
20 Dandling locale
22 One way to quit
26 Ungainly
29 Cage piece
30 Born
31 Raw minerals
32 "See ya"
33 TV chef Cat
34 Have a bug
35 "Ulalume" writer
36 Croc's cousin
37 Speak frankly
40 Transaction
41 Nerve tissue cell
45 Pic you can click
47 Conk out
49 Unaccompanied
50 Beach matter
51 Geological period
52 Right angles
53 Sandwich cookie
54 Roulette bet
55 Do in

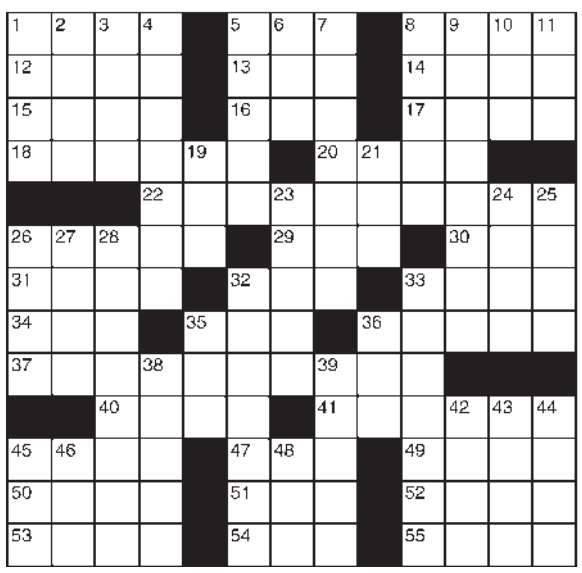
DOWN

1 Humdinger
2 Any time now
3 String instrument
4 Assaults
5 "Monopoly" building
6 Singer DiFranco
7 Cravat
8 Lindsey Vonn, for one
9 Entwined symbol of affection
10 — carte
11 Fellow
19 Demure
21 Gist
23 Laundromat machine
24 Architect Saarinen
25 Calendar quota
26 Capricorn
27 Met melody
28 "Bravo!"
32 Colorado city
33 Range horses
35 Sch. org.
36 "Gosh!"
38 Japanese fencing
39 Work dough
42 Roster
43 — podrida
44 Inquisitive
45 Equal (Pref.)
46 Automobile
48 Rage

Solution time: 25 mins.

			A	T	M			S	O	P		
	A	F	R	O			O	P	T	I	C	
	A	L	I	E	N		B	O	T	T	O	M
W	O	R	K	S		I	I	K	F	A	D	O	G
L	E	E			T	O	T	E	R		G	N	U
			P	E	A	S				S	E	E	M
	R	E	A	R	M		F	A	I	R	Y		
M	E	A	T				A	R	B	S			
O	H	S		B	R	I	E	R		R	I	O	
E	A	I	S	L	I	K	E	A	B	I	R	D	
	B	E	H	A	V	E		H	U	M	I	D	
		H	I	S	E	N		A	H	E	S		
			M	E	T			M	A	S			

Yesterday's answer 1-12



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute. touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Naya Rivera, 25; Melanie Chisholm, 38; Oliver Platt, 52; Kirstie Alley, 61.

Happy Birthday: You must take advantage of privileges that are given to you. Dealing with settlements, contracts or investments will eventually work in your favor, as long as you diligently pursue your objective. This is an excellent year to put your experience and knowledge to the test. Your numbers are 1, 6, 13, 21, 24, 36, 40.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Expect someone to confuse you or misrepresent you. You are best to take control and refrain from letting anyone speak on your behalf. You may have to take on more, but in the end you will face less controversy. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): You will fall heir to valuable information if you attend a conference or seminar, or just listen to what someone with experience has to say. Your ability to learn and masterfully apply what you discover will lead to advancement. Love is in the stars. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Don't let emotions or the people you love stand in your way. You have to pick your battles wisely and protect your money and your status from anyone trying to damage your reputation or take your cash. ✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Talk to close friends or your partner about your future plans. Getting an outside opinion as to how you should proceed professionally will give you greater insight into the best way to prepare for the future. Impulsiveness is the enemy. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Time spent working toward a professional goal will pay off. Don't give in to someone trying to talk you out of finishing what you start. Being responsible will make a good impression on someone looking for a partner. Invest in you. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Make plans to attend an event that will allow you to expand your interests and your friendships. Your ability to interact intelligently will attract someone who wants to help you develop a project that can boost your reputation. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Spending time with children or getting together with someone you love will help you form a closer bond. Taking time to enhance your image or to gain greater confidence is highlighted. Don't let anyone push you into something you don't want to do. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Look to the past for answers that will help you out now. The experience you have had with someone will give you insight into how to handle a situation you currently face. Don't let emotion cloud your vision. Act on principle. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You'll have to face the music if you have been evading issues that keep coming up in conversation. Covering up an incident that needs to be addressed or trying to avoid hurting someone's feelings will only make matters worse. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): You can handle whatever you are up against. Keeping your plans a secret until you are ready to put them into motion will allow you to avoid opposition. The element of surprise will give your plan added appeal. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Form an alliance with someone you trust. You can stabilize your life personally, financially and medically by doing what's best for you. A positive change at home and to your lifestyle should be your goal. Love is highlighted. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Play to win. You have all the right moves and will outshine anyone who competes with you. A partnership from your past can be revisited with a different set of rules. What hasn't worked in the past can work now with minor adjustments. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are smart, savvy and shrewd. You are dedicated, determined and progressive.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

		7				2		
3			9	1	7			8
	8			4			1	
			2		3			
		2				7		
			1		8			
	9			3			8	
7			6	9	4			5
		3				6		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 1/12

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

2	5	1	9	7	4	8	6	3
4	8	3	2	5	6	1	7	9
9	6	7	8	3	1	2	4	5
3	1	6	5	8	7	9	2	4
5	7	9	4	6	2	3	1	8
8	4	2	1	9	3	7	5	6
1	9	8	7	4	5	6	3	2
6	2	5	3	1	9	4	8	7
7	3	4	6	2	8	5	9	1

Difficulty Level ★★★ 1/11

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

ABRASIVES **Solution: 6 letters**

A	M	G	E	S	O	O	L	N	P	W	T	S	C	N
U	N	A	N	S	T	E	E	L	O	U	I	I	O	D
T	Ⓢ	I	R	I	F	O	S	R	M	Z	M	V	R	C
O	D	Ⓞ	M	I	P	A	N	B	E	A	A	I	A	G
B	O	S	Ⓛ	U	N	P	L	E	R	C	L	R	C	P
O	R	D	H	Ⓓ	L	E	A	E	U	L	B	M	O	E
D	S	E	N	E	R	A	C	L	I	I	A	L	C	B
Y	C	T	I	O	E	S	I	N	D	T	I	T	L	R
G	R	A	N	I	M	T	G	E	E	S	S	L	E	E
N	A	O	S	O	E	A	T	R	H	E	A	P	A	M
I	T	C	O	S	N	A	I	I	G	R	A	R	N	E
F	C	T	T	I	T	A	N	D	E	P	O	I	I	R
F	H	L	T	O	L	G	E	N	A	L	A	U	N	Y
U	E	A	R	H	C	S	I	D	L	R	O	U	G	E
B	S	E	T	T	A	M	S	S	G	R	I	N	D	H

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Alumina, Autobody, Belts, Borazon, Buffing, Carbide, Ceramic, Cleaning, Coated, Diamond, Disc, Drilling, Edges, Emery, Grain, Grind, Grit, Lapping, Loose, Marine, Material, Matte, Metal, Mineral, Novaculite, Pads, Paper, Polishing, Pumice, Rods, Rolls, Rotated, Rouge, Rough, Sand, Satin, Scratches, Sheet, Size, Smooth, Sold, Steel, Stone, Tumbler, Worn

Yesterday's Answer: Culinary

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VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
CNMI Judicial Branch

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Judicial Branch is seeking a qualified and reliable individual for the position of:

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REQUIREMENTS: Candidate must have a high school diploma or equivalent and one (1) year experience working with computers.

ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS: Candidate must possess a valid CNMI driver's license, current police and traffic clearances, and proof of eligibility to work in the CNMI.

DUTIES: The candidate in this position will work under the direct supervision of the Superior Court Clerk and is expected to perform a variety of data entry assignments on the Superior Court's case management system. He or she will secure daily access to assigned computer terminal and/or database files by maintaining password and log on/off requirements; operate computer equipment; enter selected data from court files and related documents, perform other data entry functions; operate supporting computer equipment such as printers, scanners, etc. to produce printouts and reports; stamp, date, and initial information sheets provided for confirmation of data entry; review print-outs of data to confirm data accuracy; observe system operating procedures and guidelines when working with the caseload databases, various data entry software, and/or office machines; report computer message errors to immediate supervisor; maintain setting and cleanliness of designated computer monitor, keyboard, hard drive, station, printer, scanner, and other related office equipment, and perform other duties as assigned.

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Resumes, a complete application, along with copies of police clearance and proof of eligibility to work in the CNMI should be addressed to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, at the Guma Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice, Susupe, P.O. Box 502165, Saipan, MP, 96950. Applications can be obtained at the OPM offices. Completed applications may also be submitted at the CNMI Supreme Court offices in Susupe. Resumes and applications must be submitted by 5:00p.m. on January 17th, 2012. For additional information about the position call (670) 236-9716. This job announcement can also be seen at http://www.justice.gov.mp

This project was supported by Grant Number 2009-SB-B9-0008 awarded to the CNMI Criminal Justice Planning Agency (CJPA) by the FY09 Northern Mariana Island Recovery Act: Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG), Formula Program, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice and the CNMI Government, and sub-granted by the CJPA Supervisory Council. The Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, coordinates the activities of the following program offices and bureaus: Bureau of Justice Assistance, Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Institute of Justice, Corrections Program Office, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office for Victims of Crime and Violence Against Women Office. Points of view or opinions contained within this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice or the CJPA Supervisory Council.

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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

YUHONG HE, Petitioner,	**FCD DI CIVIL ACTION NO. 11-0608**
versus	
YUJIU PAN, Respondent.	**SUMMONS**

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED RESPONDENT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Petition for Divorce which is given you herewith, within thirty (30) days after service of this Summons upon you.

YOUR ANSWER SHOULD BE IN WRITING and filed with the Clerk of Court, Guma' Hustisia, Iimwal Aweewee, House of Justice, P.O. Box 500307, Saipan, MP 96950 and served upon petitioner's counsel, Atty. Joe Hill, P.O. Box 500917, Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and send to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Petition for Divorce.

By order of the above Court:

Dated this 22nd day of December, 2011.

/s/ Deputy Clerk of Court
Superior Court

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Shu Jing Liu Petitioner,	**FCD-DI-CIVIL ACTION NO. 12-0004**
vs.	
Michael Sanchez Respondent.	**SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION**

TO THE ABOVE RESPONDENT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the court, within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is PMB 2283 Box 10002, Saipan MP 96950 as soon as practical after filing you answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at P.O. Box 500307 Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file and answer in accordance with this summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for relief in the complaint.

Dated this 9th day of January, 2012.

/s/ Clerk of Court

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Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

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Classified Ads

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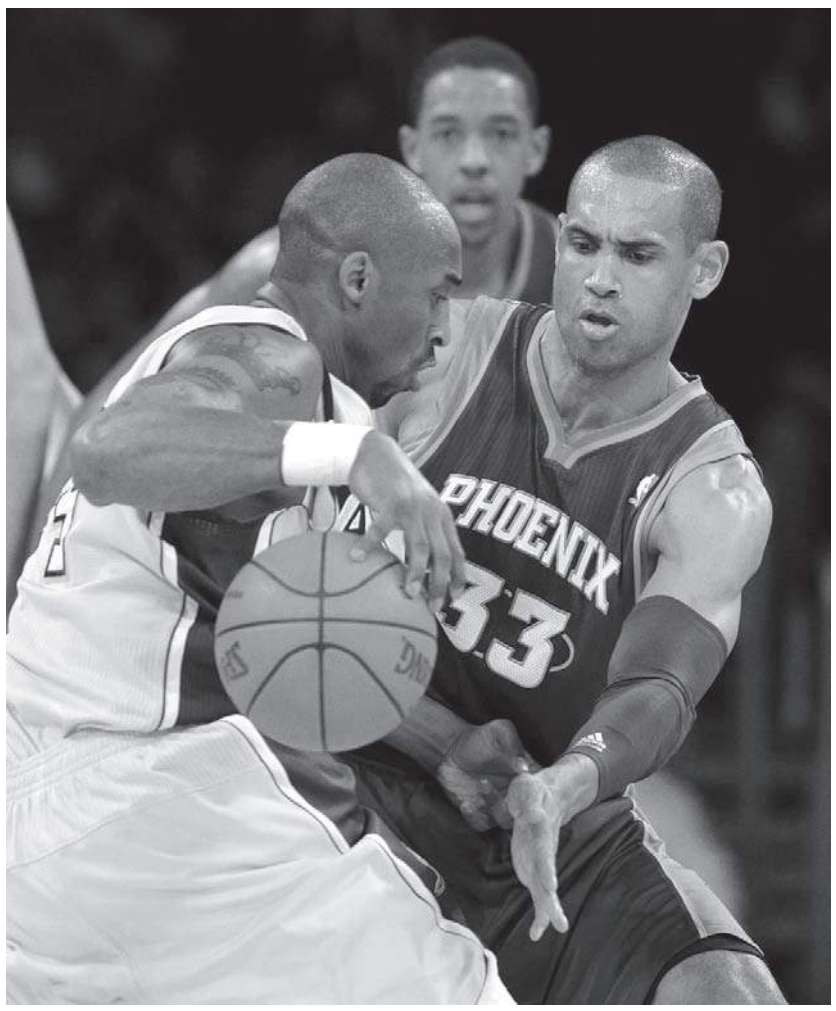
Kobe scores 48 points, Lakers beat Suns, 99-83

LOS ANGELES, California (AP)—Kobe Bryant scored 48 points—his fifth straight game with 25 or more—and the Los Angeles Lakers defeated the Phoenix Suns 99-83 Tuesday night to win their seventh straight at home and third in a row overall.

Bryant, the NBA's leading scorer, topped the 40-point mark for the first time this season, the first in the league to do so. He was 18 of 31 from the floor and made 12 of 13 free throws. Pau Gasol added 16 points and 12 rebounds.

Channing Frye scored 17 points, Marcin Gortat had 16 points and 12 rebounds, and Steve Nash added 13 points and eight assists for the Suns, who had their two-game winning streak snapped.



AP

Phoenix Suns forward Grant Hill, right, pressures Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant during the first half of their NBA basketball game in Los Angeles, Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2012.

Warriors 111, Heat 106, OT

In Oakland, Calif., Dorell Wright scored 20 points and made a season-high six three-pointers, including a tying shot late in regulation, and Golden State Warriors spoiled Dwyane Wade's return with an overtime victory over Miami.

The former Miami forward also converted a go-ahead three-pointer in the extra period, ending Golden State's five-game losing streak and giving rookie coach Mark Jackson his most impressive victory. Wright also grabbed 10 rebounds.

Wade scored a season-high 34 points after missing the last three games with a bruised left foot, but missed shots late in regulation and overtime. LeBron James had 26 points, 11 assists and seven rebounds before missing a potential tying three-pointer in the final seconds of overtime.

Miami had won three straight.

Bulls 111, Timberwlobes 100

In Minneapolis, Derrick Rose scored a season-high 31 points and had 11 assists to outlast Ricky Rubio in a thrilling duel, leading Chicago over Minnesota.

Luol Deng had 21 points and 11 rebounds, and Kyle Korver scored 13 points off the bench for the Bulls, who appeared to be on their way to a blowout early before Rubio led the Wolves back.

Rubio had 13 points, 12 assists and four rebounds. Luke Ridnour scored 22 points for the Timberwolves, who just couldn't find an answer for Rose down the stretch.

The reigning MVP shrugged off a mid-game shooting slump to score on an explosion to the basket and then knocked down a little one-handed jumper for an eight-point lead with 2:30 to play.

Kevin Love finished with 20 points and 13 rebounds, but his shooting woes continued as he made 5 of 18. Anthony Randolph scored 18 points.

Mavericks 100, Pistons 86

In Auburn Hills, Mich., Dirk Nowitzki scored 18 points, and Dallas reached the .500 mark by routing Detroit.

The defending champion Mavericks (5-5) started their NBA title defence slowly, losing four of their first five games, but they've bounced back. Tuesday's win was their first on the road. Shawn Marion scored 14 points and Vince Carter added 11 for Dallas, which led by as many as 28 in the second half.

Will Bynum scored 20 points for Detroit. The Pistons (2-8) have lost five straight games, and this was actually the least lopsided of the bunch thanks to a late run.

76ers 112, Kings 85

In Philadelphia, Elton Brand had a season-high 21 points and 10 rebounds, and Philadelphia routed Sacramento for its sixth straight victory.

The Sixers are 7-2 and lead the Atlantic Division. It's their best start since Allen Iverson helped them open 10-0 on their way to the NBA finals in 2000-01.

Rookie Jimmer Fredette scored seven points in his first start for Sacramento. Filling in for injured leading scorer Marcus Thornton shot 2 for 7. DeMarcus Cousins led the struggling Kings with 17 points.

Evan Turner had 16 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists, and Jrue Holiday added 17 for Philadelphia, which had six players reach double figures.

Thunder 100, Grizzlies 95

In Memphis, Tenn., Russell Westbrook scored 30 points, Kevin Durant added 22 points and 11 rebounds, and Oklahoma City won its fourth straight.

Thabo Sefolosha added 12 for Oklahoma City, hitting all four of his shots, including three outside the arc. James Harden finished with 10 points.

Marc Gasol led Memphis with 20 points and 14 rebounds, while Rudy Gay contributed 16 points, but was 7 of 21 from the field. Mike Conley had 15 points and 10 assists for the Grizzlies, who lost their third straight.

Bucks 106, Spurs 103

In Milwaukee, Stephen Jackson had 34 points and eight assists in his best game since joining Milwaukee in an off-season trade, leading the Bucks over San Antonio.

Milwaukee also got a big lift from the return of centre Andrew Bogut, who had 14 points and 11 rebounds after missing four games to return home to Australia for an undisclosed personal issue.

The Bucks had lost five consecutive games.

Tony Parker scored 22 points for San Antonio, which has lost all four of its road games while winning all six of its home games.

Richard Jefferson's tying three-point attempt hit the back of the rim at the buzzer.

Trail Blazers 105, Clippers 97

In Portland, Ore., Gerald Wallace scored 20 points, making a key 3-pointer with two minutes left, and Portland avenged a loss to the Clippers on New Year's Day with a victory.

LaMarcus Aldridge added 18 points and seven rebounds for the Blazers, who have not lost in six games at home this season.

Wallace's three-pointer put the Blazers ahead 99-90, but the Clippers narrowed it to 100-97 after Chris Paul made a layup and Chauncey Billups hit a jumper and a free throw with 25 seconds left. Portland made free throws the rest of the way to preserve the win.

Jazz 113, Cavs 105

In Salt Lake City, Al Jefferson scored a season-high 30 points and Paul Millsap added 19 and Utah defeated Cleveland.

It was Utah's fifth straight win as the Jazz (6-3) improved to 5-0 at home.

The Jazz are off to their best start at home since beginning the 2008-09 season at 6-0.

The Cavs (4-5) fell to 1-3 on a seven-game road trip, and visit Phoenix, the L.A. Lakers and Charlotte next.

Antawn Jamison led Cleveland with 22 points, including 13 in the third quarter, as he tried to rally the Cavs.

Wizards 93, Raptors 78

In Washington, Rashard Lewis and Nick Young each had 15 points to lead Washington to its first win after eight straight losses.

Andray Blatche had nine points and eight rebounds in 25 minutes. John Wall tied his season high with nine assists, but missed nine of 12 shots. In his past two games, Wall is 6 for 21 from the field.

Toronto, which was playing its second of three games in three nights, was led by Andrea Bargnani with 22 points.

Rockets 82, Bobcats 70

In Charlotte, N.C., rookie Chandler Parsons scored 20 points and Kevin Martin added 17 points and Houston defeated Charlotte to snap a four-game losing streak.

Jordan Hill had a double-double for the Rockets off the bench with 12 points and 12 rebounds.

The Rockets (3-6) broke open a tight game in the third quarter and the poor-shooting Bobcats could never put together a big run.

For some Associated Press voters, Tide not No. 1

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Alabama's convincing victory in the BCS championship wasn't enough to convince all 60 Associated Press college football poll voters that the Crimson Tide is No. 1.

Four members of the media panel had Oklahoma State at No. 1, and Erik Gee, of KNML-AM in Albuquerque, N.M., picked LSU—as he said he would before the game.

"I was a lot closer than I thought I would be to changing my mind," Gee said during a telephone interview Tuesday. "I don't think I necessarily felt good about voting for LSU. But I also didn't feel good about voting for Alabama. I stared at the computer for 10 minutes. It wasn't an easy decision."

Alabama (12-1) was an overwhelming No. 1 in the final Top 25, receiving 55 votes. LSU (13-1), which beat Alabama 9-6 in overtime on the road in November and played a much tougher schedule than the Tide, finished second and Oklahoma State (12-1) was third.

The USA Today coaches' poll had the same top three, but those voters are contractually obligated to put the winner of the BCS title game No. 1 on their ballots. While there have been occasions when coaches have ignored the rule, it was not the case this season. Alabama received all 59 first-place votes.

Only once in the last five years has the final AP No. 1 been unanimous. Unbeaten Alabama received all 60 first-place votes after the 2009 season.

The Crimson Tide's 21-0 victory Monday night at the Superdome didn't sway Gee, but it did persuade two other AP voters who had said they expected to vote LSU (13-1) No. 1 even if the Tigers lost.

"The score says it all," Joe Giglio, of the News & Observer in Raleigh, N.C., said in an email early Tuesday morning.

Giglio ended up voting Alabama No. 1.

Seth Emerson, of The Macon Telegraph in Georgia, was also leaning hard toward keeping LSU in the top spot.

"My thinking was I was going to keep the Tigers No. 1 unless they got trounced—and they did," he said.

Emerson, however, ended up giving Oklahoma State his first-place vote, along with Matt Markey, of The Toledo Blade in Ohio, Steve Conroy, of the Boston Herald, and Scott Wolf, of the Los Angeles Daily News.

Big 12 champion Oklahoma State finished its season with a 41-38 overtime victory against Stanford in the Fiesta Bowl last week, and many fans believed the Cowboys should have played LSU instead of Alabama getting a second chance to beat its Southeastern Conference rival.

But when the final BCS standings were posted in December, the Tide was second behind LSU and just ahead of Oklahoma State. The AP Top 25 isn't part of the formula used to determine the championship matchup.

Emerson had Oklahoma State second and Alabama third in his final regular-season rankings, and said the Cowboys had done enough to stay ahead of the Tide after both won bowl games.

"OSU wins and drops a spot?" he said.

Emerson said Oklahoma State had more quality victories than Alabama, and as good as the Tide is defensively, the Cowboys were as impressive on offensive.

"All I know is every time I saw them, Oklahoma State scored points," he said. "I think Oklahoma State would give Alabama a hell of a game."

Emerson would like to see changes in the Bowl Championship Series that would allow more than just two teams to play for the national title in the postseason.

That sentiment was prevalent in comments made by all five voters who didn't roll with the Tide.

"I thought Oklahoma State played a better overall schedule than Alabama and deserved a share of the title if LSU lost," Wolf said in an email. "The fact that Alabama got a second shot at LSU influenced my decision because it is tough to beat the same team twice.

"It's not Oklahoma State's fault the BCS system denied them a chance to play in the title game."

Conroy said his "gut feeling" was Oklahoma State's offense, which was third in the nation at 550 yards per game, would have prevailed against Alabama's top-ranked defense, which allowed 183 yards per game.

"It would have been a great game and it would be nice to see a plus-one system in the future," he said.

The plus-one is a four-team playoff BCS officials say they to plan to consider as the future format for the postseason.

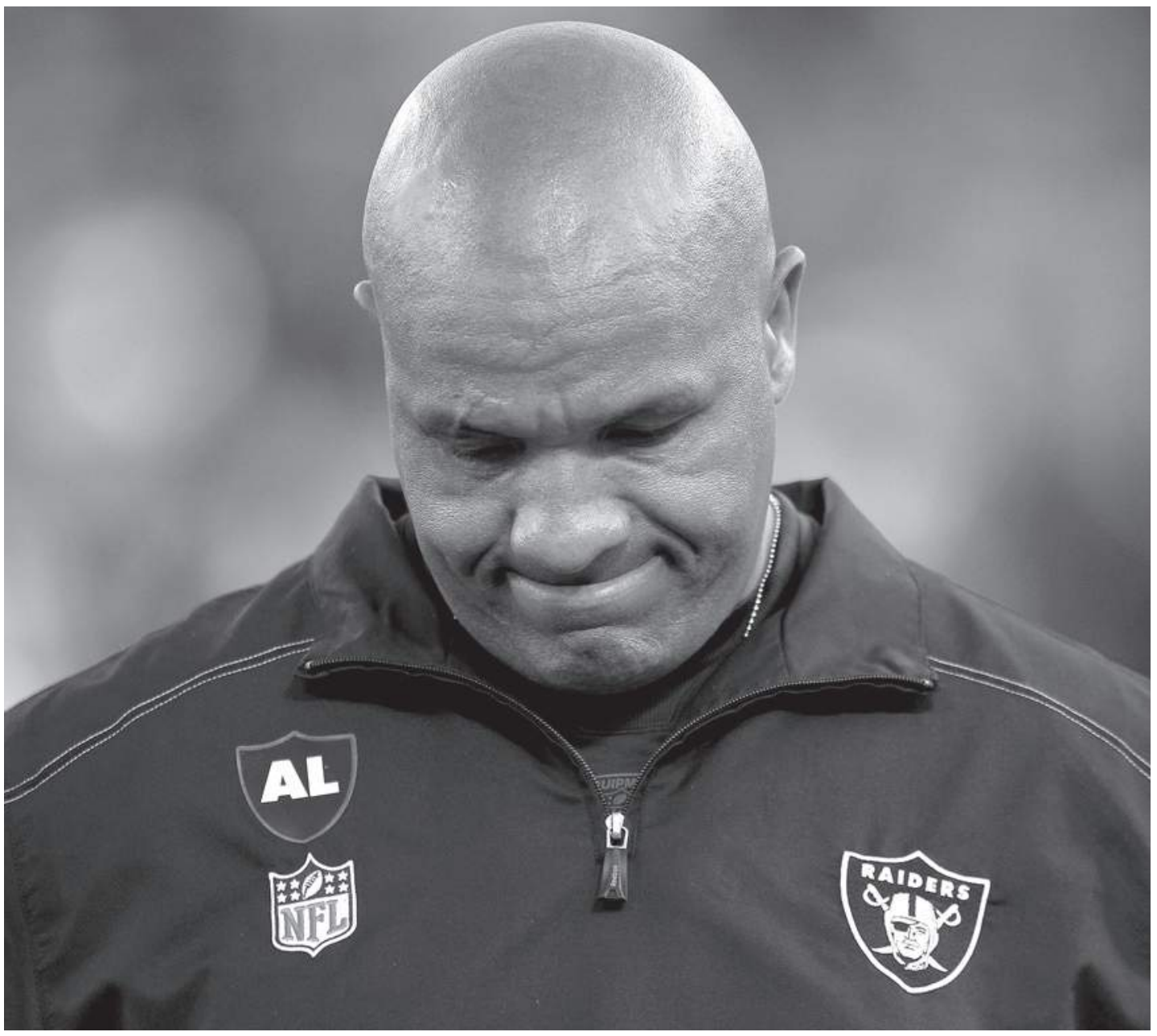
Gee said he gave LSU the top spot as a reward for "their full body of work."

LSU won the SEC title by beating No. 19 Georgia in the league championship game, and won six games away from home, including wins over No. 4 Oregon and No. 17 West Virginia. None of the top three teams faced as tough a schedule. And the Tigers did split with Alabama.

Gee insisted this was not a protest vote against the BCS or a way to get attention.

"This was not a publicity stunt," he said. "This is my opinion."

Oakland Raiders fire first-year coach Hue Jackson



AP

In this Jan. 1, 2012 file photo, Oakland Raiders head coach Hue Jackson looks down on the field during the fourth quarter of an NFL football game against the San Diego Chargers in Oakland, Calif.

ALAMEDA, Calif. (AP)—Reggie McKenzie made clear on his first day as Raiders general manager that there's a new regime in Oakland.

Soon after officially signing his contract to be the first general manager since longtime owner Al Davis' death, McKenzie fired coach Hue Jackson in a bold first move as he looks to give the organization a fresh start.

"There comes a time when change is necessary," McKenzie said Tuesday. "For the Raiders the time is now. The Raiders organization, with respect and deference for all its tradition and history, is about to embark on a new era."

The era will begin without Jackson, who was fired after going 8-8 in his first season as head coach. McKenzie wanted to bring in his "own guy" to rebuild the organization.

Finding that coach will be the first major task for McKenzie, who also must bulk up the personnel department and evaluate the roster in what promises to be a busy offseason.

Owner Mark Davis said McKenzie will decide on the new coach and the personnel decisions, with the coach ultimately reporting to the general manager.

That's a major change from how the organization was run before Davis' father, Al, died of heart failure on Oct. 8. Al Davis made all the major decisions when he was in charge of the team, with many of those now falling to McKenzie as Mark Davis focuses on finding a new stadium and other off-field issues.

"Change happened on October 8th," Davis said. ""The one thing I know is what I don't know. The one thing I did know was I needed to bring the right people in here. ... My feeling always has been that if my father wasn't here we needed someone to run that football side of the building. I needed to find the right person. I truly believe that Reggie McKenzie is the right man for this job."

McKenzie had spent the past 18 years in the front office of the Green Bay Packers, last serving as director of football operations. He was well-respected for his role in helping to build a Super Bowl championship team with the Packers and also had ties to the Raiders, having played linebacker for four years with the team in the 1980s.

Many of his former teammates were on hand at the news conference introducing him.

"Guys, this is where I came from. I'm back home now. I'm back home," he said. "As soon as Mark told me `We want you for the job' I couldn't, you know, I couldn't stop smiling."

Davis said he had targeted McKenzie as his desired general manager in the weeks after his father's death and noted it was awkward when he ran into him at the Raiders' game in Green Bay last month. About an hour after Oakland's season ended, Davis had the organization formally request permission from the Packers to interview McKenzie.

They sat down for a six-hour interview last Wednesday, with former Raiders coach John Madden assisting Davis. They quickly finalized the deal and McKenzie signed it Tuesday morning.

He then immediately fired Jackson, marking a rapid fall for the man who was in charge of personnel decisions and coaching after Davis' death.

Jackson made the trade for quarterback Carson Palmer after starter Jason Campbell broke his collarbone, costing the Raiders a 2012 first-round draft pick and a conditional 2013 second-rounder.

While Palmer showed signs of giving the Raiders a big-time quarterback, he was unable to get Oakland to the playoffs for the first time since 2002, raising questions about how effective that trade was.

After starting the season 7-4, the Raiders lost four of their final five games to mark their ninth straight season without a winning record or a playoff berth. A late-game collapse at home against Detroit on Dec. 18 and a 38-26 loss to San Diego at home in the season finale did in the Raiders and ultimately Jackson.

Jackson joined the Raiders as offensive coordinator in 2010 under head coach Tom Cable and engineered a dramatic improvement as Oakland more than doubled its point total and improved to 8-8. That helped him get the job when Davis decided not to retain Cable.

The offense wasn't quite as effective with Jackson as head coach, with injuries to star running back Darren McFadden, receiver Jacoby Ford and Campbell played a role in the decline.

But the biggest problems this past season were an inability to curb the team's propensity for penalties and on the defensive side of the ball. The team committed 163 penalties for 1,358 yards, setting records in both categories, as Jackson was unable to instill the discipline he promised.

The Raiders also had franchise worsts in touchdown passes allowed (31), yards per carry (5.1), yards passing (4,262) and total yards (6,201), while giving up the third-most points (433) in team history.

Oakland joined this season's Tampa Bay team as two of the four teams to allow at least 30 TD passes and 5.0 yards per carry in a season, a distinction achieved previously by only the 1950 Baltimore Colts and 1952 Dallas Texans. The Raiders also became the sixth team since the 1970 merger to allow at least 2,000 yards rushing and 4,000 yards passing in a season.

The new coach will be Oakland's seventh in the past 10 seasons, following Bill Callahan, Norv Turner, Art Shell, Lane Kiffin, Cable and Jackson.

Jaguars hire Mike Mularkey as head coach

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP)—The Jacksonville Jaguars have hired Atlanta Falcons offensive coordinator Mike Mularkey as head coach, a move they hope will help improve the league's worst offense.

The team plans to introduce Mularkey at a news conference Wednesday. The Florida Times-Union first reported the hire.

Mularkey's Falcons managed only two points in a wild-card loss to the New York Giants on Sunday. Nonetheless, his long relationship with Jaguars general manager Gene Smith made him a front-runner from the beginning of the search.

He previously was a head coach with Buffalo, where he went 14-18 before being fired after the 2005 season. He has been Atlanta's offensive coordinator since 2008, helping mentor quarterback Matt Ryan. The Jaguars hope he can do the same with Blaine Gabbert, who struggled in his first season.

The hire comes less than a week after new owner Shahid Khan officially took over the franchise. Khan made it clear he wanted an offensive-minded coach to turn around a franchise that has missed the playoffs 10 times in the last 12 years.

Even though the Jaguars had the worst offense in the league, Smith and Khan believe they are close to piecing together a playoff-caliber roster that features running back Maurice Jones-Drew, tight end Marcedes Lewis and a defense that ranked sixth in the NFL despite several key injuries down the stretch.

Mularkey will be tasked with getting it done.

He could serve as offensive coordinator as well. His biggest task will be locking down a defensive coordinator. The Jaguars would like to bring back Mel Tucker, who interviewed for the defensive coordinator position in Minnesota, and maybe several of his defensive assistants.

The Jaguars went 5-11 this season, which was one of the most tumultuous years in franchise history.

The Jaguars released starting quarterback David Garrard five days before the opener, switched QBs again two weeks later and matched the worst start in franchise history (1-5). Then-owner Wayne Weaver fired coach Jack Del Rio on the same late November day that he announced he was selling the team. Tucker took over and made significant changes, cutting starting receiver Jason Hill, firing receivers coach Johnny Cox and reassigning quarterbacks coach Mike Sheppard.

The Jaguars went 2-3 under Tucker, not enough for him to get the full-time job.

Tucker, Carolina Panthers offensive coordinator Rob Chudzinski and New York Jets offensive coordinator Brian Schottenheimer were interviewed for the position. Denver's Mike McCoy also was expected to be interviewed, but Mularkey was offered the job Tuesday.

Although many outsiders called Jacksonville the least desirable of the open NFL jobs, Mularkey has some building blocks.

Jones-Drew bounced back from a knee injury in 2010 to break the franchise's single-season rushing record with 1,606 yards, which also led the league. His accomplishment was even more impressive considering the Jaguars had the NFL's worst passing offense.

Only three others since 1978—New Orleans' George Rogers in 1981, Los Angeles' Eric Dickerson in 1986 and Baltimore's Jamal Lewis in 2003—won the rushing title on a team ranked last in passing.

Jones-Drew routinely faced stacked lines and run blitzes. Nonetheless, he averaged 100 yards a game. He finished with 1,980 yards from scrimmage, second in the league behind Baltimore's Ray Rice, and accounted for 47.7 percent of Jacksonville's offense.

But in a passing league, the Jaguars realize they need more. They have to get Lewis back to Pro Bowl form and need to get Gabbert better prepared to handle the most important position in football.

A first-round pick in 2006, Lewis had 58 catches for 700 yards and 10 touchdowns in 2010 and was rewarded with a five-year, $35 million contract that included $17 million guaranteed. But he had 39 receptions for a team-high 460 yards this season, including just two catches in the red zone and no scores.

Gabbert completed 50.8 percent of his passes for 2,214 yards, with 12 touchdowns and 11 interceptions. He was sacked 40 times and lost five of his 12 fumbles. His most troubling trait was pocket presence. Gabbert often seemed scared under the slightest pressure and struggled all season with his accuracy, especially on short throws.

Mayweather calls out Pacquiao on Twitter

GREG BEACHAM
AP SPORTS WRITER

BOXING

Floyd Mayweather Jr. has taken his quest for a fight with Manny Pacquiao to Twitter.

The unbeaten Mayweather publicly challenged and taunted the Filipino superstar on Tuesday, daring Pacquiao to meet him May 5 in Las Vegas.

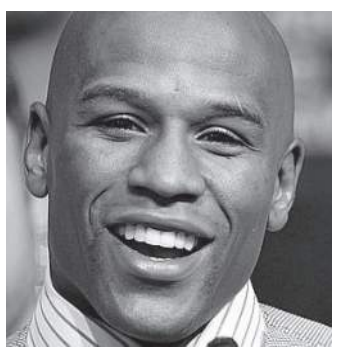
"Manny Pacquiao I'm calling you out let's fight May 5th and give the world what they want to see," Mayweather tweeted.

Moments later, Mayweather tweeted: "My Jail Sentence was pushed back because the date was locked in. Step up Punk."

Mayweather is available for a fight in May at the MGM Grand Garden after a judge agreed last week to postpone his jail sentence in a domestic violence case until June. Mayweather was sentenced to 87 days in jail, but likely will serve less time.

Mayweather and Pacquiao are boxing's top two stars, and they have circled each other warily for more than two years. Both have said they're eager to fight, yet still haven't reached a deal for what's likely to be the most lucrative bout in boxing history.

While Pacquiao appeared to be more eager for the fight when the two first began verbally sparring in 2009, Mayweather has taken the lead in recent months, stepping up his campaign since



Mayweather

Pacquiao's narrow win over Juan Manuel Marquez last November.

Mayweather's tweets appear to put the megafight's future in Pacquiao's hands—and a decision likely will be made soon.

Top Rank promoter Bob Arum traveled to the Philippines this week to meet with Pacquiao, planning to choose the eight-division champion's next opponent. Arum, who has repeatedly said Mayweather won't actually agree to fight Pacquiao because he fears losing, has a list of candidates including Marquez, Miguel Cotto, Lamont Peterson and Timothy Bradley Jr. for Pacquiao's next bout.

Arum also has suggested Pacquiao might not be ready to prepare for a fight in May because of a facial cut from his win over Marquez. Mayweather's camp has dismissed that notion as subterfuge, saying cuts rarely require several months to heal.

Golden Boy Promotions CEO Richard Schaefer, whose company has promoted Mayweather's last five fights, has suggested Mayweather's Cinco de Mayo fight could be against popular 154-pound Mexican champion Saul "Canelo" Alvarez or lightweight champion Robert Guerrero, a Mexican-American from the Bay Area, if he can't make a deal with Pacquiao.

But if Mayweather and Pacquiao intend to make their long-awaited fight, both sides know they must do it quickly, since a promotion of that size would require several months of preparation.

Mayweather controls his own Twitter feed, which is often filled with pictures of his fiancée and braggadocio about his gambling exploits. On Monday night, he tweeted a photo of a betting slip, claiming he won $400,000 on the BCS title game.

RGA January qualifier at MCC

The Refaluwasch Golf Association will be holding its January Ace qualifying tournament this Sunday, Jan. 15, at the Marianas Country Club.

Check-in time is at 11am, while tee off is at 12pm. Winner of RGA's first tournament for 2012 will set the score to beat for January. If the score is undefeated, this Sunday's top finisher gets to keep the January Ace plum.

Meanwhile, RGA is now open for membership for only $25.

For more information, contact president Joe Saures at 483-5508 and vice president Jess Wabol at 288-1119. ***(RGA)***

Saipan tops Guam in Marianas 8-Ball Shootout

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

SAIPAN BILLIARDS ASSOCIATION

Team Saipan defeated Team Guam in the 2012 Marianas Shootout friendly billiards tournament held at Jonny's Bar & Grill last Sunday.

The Saipan team was made up of Saipan Billiard Association members Rolly Villanueva, Patrick Taitano, and Chester Cuento. The team was presented with individual trophies and a cash prize of $120.

Team Guam was comprised of Guam Budweiser League members George Basile, Phillip Tam, and Victor Ryan Sr. The trio was given consolation runner-up trophies.

The tournament was formatted with six rounds of singles play ending with a partner's tiebreaker finale, if needed. This is the first year of the event.

Team Guam actually started out very strong with three straight singles match victories.

Tam defeated Cuento, Ryan bested SBA's 2011 Aginan division most valuable player Villanueva, and Basile handled SBA's Obyan MVP Taitano, but Saipan rallied and surged ahead, 6-3, in the next two sets of singles play.

Cuento topped Basile and then Ryan, Villanueva defeated Tam and Basile, and Taitano took down Ryan and Tam to turn the tables.

Then in the fourth set, Cuento and Villanueva pulled out hat tricks over Tam and Ryan, respectively, that shifted the score to 8-4 and a match later Villanueva sealed the deal over Tam.

Team Saipan's Rolly Villanueva, Chester Cuento. and Patrick Taitano pose with the Marianas Shootout Friendly Billiards Tournament championship trophy after defeating a handpicked visiting trio from the Guam Budweiser 8-Ball League on Sunday at Jonny's Bar & Grill.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

THEA

From Page 28

and Lauren Smileski of Australia and then recorded two victories versus fellow Touring Team players Alesi Molotii of Tuvalu and Lorish Puluspene of Papua New Guinea, 3-6, 6-2, 11-9, and Victoria's Priscilla Dawson and Julia Stutsel, 6-2, 6-2, to top the field with an undefeated record.

The doubles win was a big improvement from Minor's debut in the same tournament last year. The CNMI junior netter teamed up with California's Sabine Ludwig in 2011 and dropped their opening match against Trimari and Samuelle Bull.

The doubles championship also came a few hours after the 15-year-old player lost in the battle for third place against Spring in the U16 singles. Minor's settled for fourth place in the singles division, which was still a significant progress, as she also dropped her first match in the same tournament last year and then made it only to the quarterfinals of the consolation draw.

CNMI netters join second tourney

After completing her first tournament, Minor is now in Wodonga, Victoria for the 2012 Victorian Junior Grasscourt Championships. Joining her in Victoria are fellow CNMI netters Tammy Ackerman, Rafael Jones, and Christian Miller.

Minor will still play in the girls U16 singles and doubles at the Wodonga Tennis Centre. In the singles division, she will meet Dawson anew with the winner facing either Shannon or Spring. Minor bowed to Shannon in the singles semis in Albury. In the doubles tournament in Victoria, the Saipan Southern High School student has a new partner in Puluspene and they are seeded second in the draw behind Molotii and Shannon.

Miller will also compete in the U16 singles, but he has to go through another qualifying tournament before making it to the main draw. His first opponent in Victory is the No. 11 seed Beau Mathew Pleming and he needs two wins in the qualifier to advance to the main draw. In Albury, Miller won his first match in the qualifier, but lost in the second round and failed to make it to the main draw. The 16-year-old CNMI bet will also compete in the doubles and this time he is in the main draw, joining forces with Kiribati's Teba Tito and dueling Australian pair Trafford Mccrory and Lachlan Skinner.

Ackerman is entered in the girls U12 singles and doubles. She challenges the host's Kirsten Waters today and then teams up with his Albury tormentor Jasmin Ruby Starr in the doubles later in the afternoon. Ackerman and Starr will square off against Jovana Stanisic and Mia Vukicevic in the first round.

Jones will also play at the Wodonga Tennis Centre, but will not be competing in the same tournament. He will be playing in the men's singles of the 2012 Wodonga Grasscourt Championships and will duel Cameron Hart in the first round of the qualifying draw. In the doubles, Jones is in the main draw and will partner with Fiji's Raj Reddy. The two Oceania players were scheduled to meet No. 4 seeds Edward John Benson and James Palmer yesterday.

JOE

From Page 28

ual trophy along with other past Ace of Aces champions. He also received a $200 cash prize and the privilege to keep the coveted league trophy for a year.

Sablan also cashed in well on a number of side games, including accruing the most pars with 13, tying John Guerrero for least putts with 26, and tied three other players, who all scratched a birdie apiece on Saturday. Sablan won $25 for each feat.

"The wind was very strong, but I factored it in pretty well overall. I think the real key to my success, however was my putting," said Sablan in a phone interview yesterday.

Closest to the pin winners included Guerrero on hole No .3, Sherlyn Jones on hole No. 7 and Aces of Aces runner-up Babauta on hole No. 17; nobody won on hole No. 12.

Babauta came in second place with an even 70 net card, Jones netted a 72 for third place, while Guerrero and Ben Jones posted 74s, Diding Hocog marked a 75, Terry Guerrero a 76, Delores Yamagishi and Frank Sablan even 80s, and Joe Tudela an 84.

Other non-ace participants included Manny Blas, Larry Hocog, Dan Quitugua, Joe Sablan Sr., and Felix Sasamoto.

Aside from Sablan's score, additional scoring details were not made available.

In related news, the club's January Ace qualifier tees off this Sunday at Kingfisher Golf Links.

The January Ace is then slated for Jan. 29 but the location is still being determined.

The combined net scores of two events per month determine each monthly ace.

There are 23 active Amigos Golf Club of Saipan members and new players are always welcome.

Both men and women compete against one another in a handicap-based net scoring system.

For more information, contact president John Guerrero at 287-6352, vice president Joe Sablan at 322-1177, or treasurer Lorraine Babauta at 989-7732.

FALL

From Page 28

The Norman Del Rosario-coached MP United dominated the Best of 11 as the team also ruled the round robin competition that ended last month and finished undefeated in six games.

Other teams that joined the boys U15 field were Paire, MP United Blue, and Shirley's FC 1 and 2.

In the boys U18, MP United also reigned supreme in the three-club field and had five players earning slots to the Best of 11. The list includes forward Yi Shan Wang, midfielders Dae Min Jeon, Jeoung Joon Lee, and Jin Han Yoon, and defender Moon Bin Hong. Joining the MP United players in the selection were Paire forward Zhi Peng Lin, midfielder Timothy Tawanpiy, defenders Eric Devin Atalig, Raphael Zapanta, and Hae Sung Lee, and goalie Don Cabrera.

The girls U15 division had five clubs and four had representatives to the Best 9. Making the list are forwards Jeraldine Castillo of Shirley's FC and Amy Taylor of MP United; midfielders Alexandria Vergara of Shirley's FC and Seoung Hyun Lee and Hae Ri Kim of MP United; defenders Melody Johnson of Shirley's FC and Juliana Muna and Mikaela Duenas of Paire FC; and goalie Masami Sato of MP United.

Shirley's FC topped the girls U15 league with an unbeaten record, dethroning many-time champion Matansa.

Players on the cream of the crop were selected by coaches and will be receiving certificates for their notable performances.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	7	2	.778	–
New York	5	4	.556	2
Boston	4	4	.500	2 1/2
Toronto	4	6	.400	3 1/2
New Jersey	2	8	.200	5 1/2

Southeast Division

Miami	8	2	.800	–
Atlanta	7	3	.700	1
Orlando	6	3	.667	1 1/2
Charlotte	2	8	.200	6
Washington	1	8	.111	6 1/2

Central Division

Chicago	9	2	.818	–
Indiana	6	3	.667	2
Cleveland	4	5	.444	4
Milwaukee	3	6	.333	5
Detroit	2	8	.200	6 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	6	4	.600	–
Dallas	5	5	.500	1
Memphis	3	6	.333	2 1/2
Houston	3	6	.333	2 1/2
New Orleans	3	6	.333	2 1/2

Northwest Division

Oklahoma City	9	2	.818	–
Portland	7	2	.778	1
Utah	6	3	.667	2
Denver	6	4	.600	2 1/2
Minnesota	3	7	.300	5 1/2

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	7	4	.636	–
L.A. Clippers	4	3	.571	1
Phoenix	4	5	.444	2
Golden State	3	6	.333	3
Sacramento	3	7	.300	3 1/2

Yesterday's Games

Houston 82, Charlotte 70
Washington 93, Toronto 78
Philadelphia 112, Sacramento 85
Dallas 100, Detroit 86
Chicago 111, Minnesota 100
Oklahoma City 100, Memphis 95
Milwaukee 106, San Antonio 103
Utah 113, Cleveland 105
Portland 105, L.A. Clippers 97
Golden State 111, Miami 106, OT
L.A. Lakers 99, Phoenix 83

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IT&E Youth Friendly Christmas Basketball Tournament

Photos By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND

The Docomo Rollers pose for a team photo after settling for runner-up honors in the U15 division.

U17's Rollers AA poses for a group photo after defeating Rollers A in Saturday's championship tiff.

Rollers A finished second place in the U17 division.

DYS' Renan Lansang is fouled while attempting a shot in the IT&E Youth Friendly Christmas Basketball Tournament U15 championship against the Docomo Rollers.

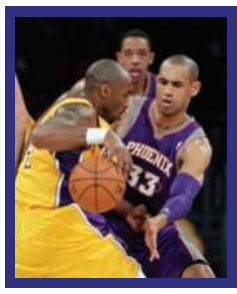
Rollers A's Christian Itaas stops, pops, and drops a shot in the U12 finals against Rollers AA.

U12's Rollers A coach John Dela Cruz gathers his players during a time out in the U12 championship match against Rollers AA.

Rollers A's Ethan Kwon gets hacked in the U12 finals by Rollers AA's Roger Valencia.

Rollers A players receive runners-up honors in the U12 championship.

Rollers AA's Angelo Factor and his father Jun graciously accepts his U12 MVP medal after the championship game of the 2nd Annual IT&E Youth Friendly Christmas Basketball Tournament.



Kobe scores 48 points, Lakers beat Suns, 99-83

24

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Oakland Raiders fire first-year coach Hue Jackson

25

Thea clinches doubles crown in Australia

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Thea Minor wrapped up her first tournament in Australia with a championship win in the girls U16 doubles.

Minor and teammate Annie Shannon of Fiji went 4-0 in the round-robin competition in the 2012 Australia Post Margaret Court Cup in Albury, sealing the doubles crown after a victory via walkover against New Caledonia's Assaya Trimari and Australia Isabella Spring last Tuesday afternoon. The Oceania ITF Touring Team also won via walkover against top seeds Marta Brzozowska

See THEA on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Thea Minor, seen here going for a baseline return in a local tournament, won a doubles crown in Australia.

Joe Sablan Jr. declared Amigo Golf Club's 2011 Ace of Aces

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Amigo Golf Club Saipan vice president and newly crowned 2011 Ace of Aces champion Joe Sablan Jr., right, poses with the perpetual and individual season finale awards alongside club treasurer and 2011 June Ace Lorraine Babauta at the group's awards banquet held at a residence in San Vicente last Saturday.

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

The Amigo Golf Club Saipan's vice president Joe Sablan Jr. arose as the group's 2011 Ace of Aces champion after the conclusion of its season finale at Coral Ocean Point last Saturday.

Sablan posted a 36 on the front nine and remained steady after the turn with a 39 on the backside for a gross score of 75.

His 8-handicap was adjusted to a field low 67. Sablan topped nine former monthly aces by three strokes and to now has his name added to the club's perpet-

See JOE on Page 26

MHS1, GCA sweep volleyball opener

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

The Marianas High School varsity Lady Dolphins-MHS1 and the Grace Christian Academy Lady Eagles cruised to one-sided wins over separate opponents as the Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization girls volleyball season started on Tuesday at the MHS Gymnasium.

In addition, both the junior and varsity Lady Geckos of Saipan International School also notched victories.

The 2011 runner-up MHS1 dominated newcomer Marianas Baptist Academy in three sets. MBA put up good fight, but fell short in the opening set, 17-25, before MHS1 stepped it up a level and secured the win, 25-6 in the next frame. MHS1 went on to take the final set, 15-6.

GCA, meanwhile, grinded out a sweep over Kagman High School, 25-17, 25-21, and 15-11, but despite the final score KHS often showed signs of life during the match.

SIS' junior varsity (SIS2) bested MHS2, 25-12, 25-14, but the latter finished strong and took the third set, 15-10, to save face.

Meanwhile, the defending champion SIS1 was gifted its first win via a no-show forfeit by the Saipan Southern High School Lady Manta Rays.

The season continues today at 4pm with MHS1 on a road draw against SIS2 at the north end and MBA hosting SSHS on the south court.

Then at 5pm GCA takes on SIS1 on the north side and MHS2 calls KHS to the south square.

Fall league's Best 11, Best 9 named

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Thirty-one players made it to the elite list of players who showed outstanding performances in the 2011 NMIFA Youth Football Fall League.

Named to the Best 11 in the boys U15 are forwards Jehn Joyner and Ryota Ito of MP United Silver; midfielders Dakota Hall and Jake Lee of MP United Silver, Jireh Yobech of Matansa Football Club, and Jeff Cheon Palacios of Paire FC; defenders Kennedy Izuka, Enrico del Rosario, and John Taisacan of MP United Silver, and Kenneth Domingo of Tan Holdings FC; and goalkeeper Gregzon Fontanilla of MP United Silver.

See FALL on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Members of the Best 11 for the boys U15 division of the NMIFA fall league pose for a group photo last Friday at the Oleai Sports Complex.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Members of the Best 9 for the girls U15 division of the NMIFA fall league pose for a group photo last Friday at the Oleai Sports Complex.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Members of the Best 11 for the boys U18 division of the NMIFA fall league pose for a group photo last Friday at the Oleai Sports Complex.